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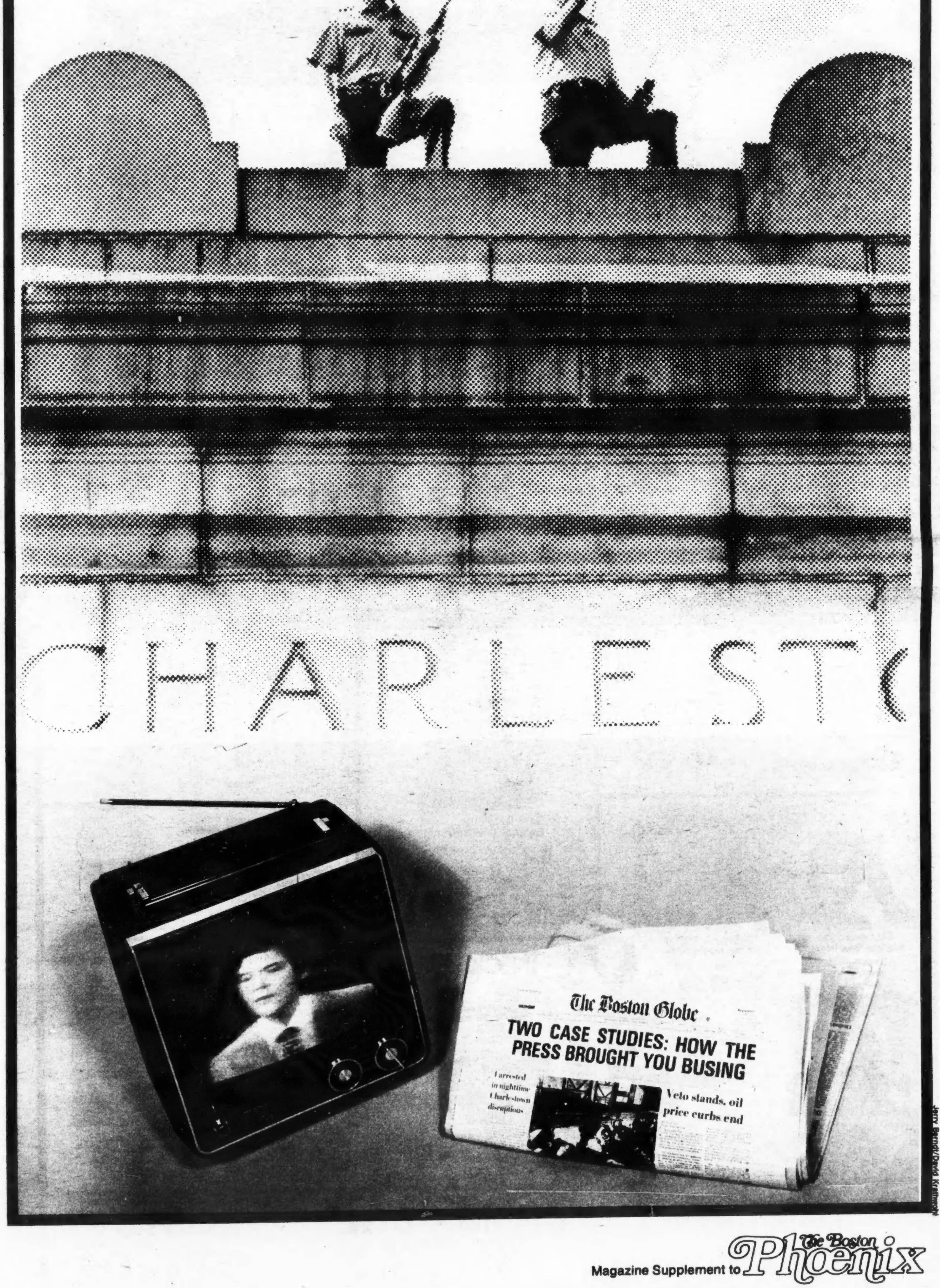
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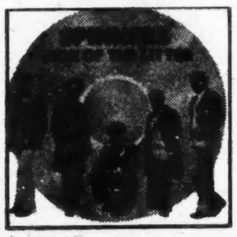

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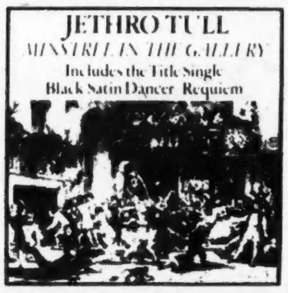
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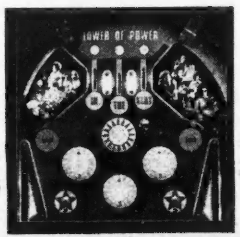
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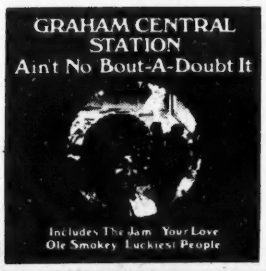
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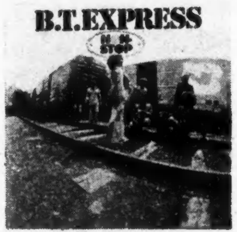

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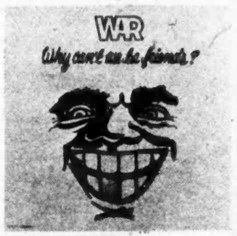
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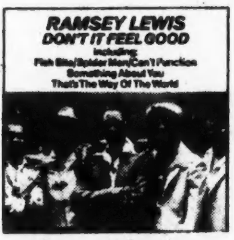
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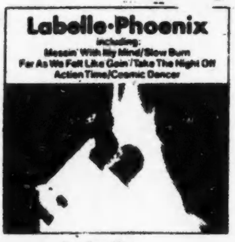
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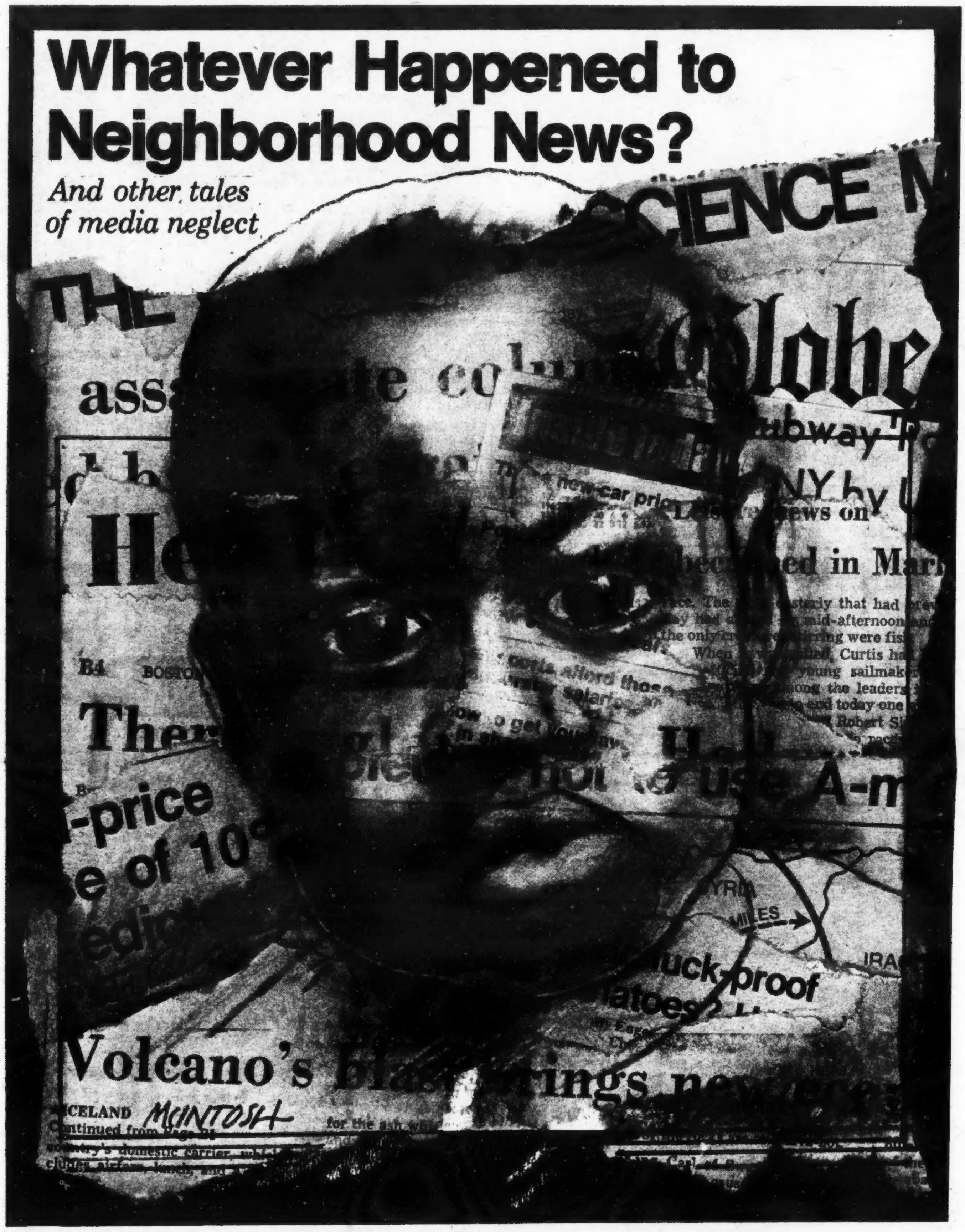
Whatever Happened to Neighborhood News?

And other tales of media neglect



By Alan Lupo

The war, which should be started by us, would be entirely justified because it would be waged in self-defense . . . . The least we can do is go down with our guns roaring.

—words of wisdom from John Fox, publisher of the *Boston Post*, calling on the US to wage war in Russia, one day in March 1954

This magazine cannot afford to be the cutting edge for blacks and Puerto Ricans . . . . We don't need any more irrelevant stories about irrelevant people like that guy Salboochi [Fred Salvucci, then transportation aide to Kevin White, today the state's Secretary of Transportation].

—words of wisdom from D. Herbert Lipson, publisher of *Boston Magazine*, enunciated one day in February 1974, thus prompting the resignation of one editor and one writer

In the two decades between the inanities of John Fox and those of Herb Lipson, much has happened to journalism in Boston. Much of the parochialism, the anti-communist fervor and the willingness to let Yankee businessmen and Princes of the Church indirectly edit copy have disappeared. And good riddance. They have been replaced, however, by a transient kind of journalism which reinvents the wheel every few days, and inanities continue as ever.

New faces belonging to re-

Continued on page 4

Alan Lupo, a former reporter at the Baltimore Sun, *the* Boston Globe, *Channel 2 and* Boston Magazine, *has written one book,* Rights of Passage, *and is currently working on another, a history of Boston politics.*

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Neglect

Continued from page 3

porters at the *Globe, Herald,* the *Christian Science Monitor,* Channels 4, 5, 7 and 2 and the *Phoenix* and *Real Paper* mingle with those of freelancers and part-time correspondents hustling for a break in the business. They rush from conflagration to press conference to riot to confront people with whom they share little or nothing in upbringing, race, religion, mores or lifestyle, to ask similar questions and record parts of quotes and rush back to their news operations, sometimes staffed by men and women with little or no background in the stories or areas being covered.

They confuse South Boston with the South End. They tell you about Jim Curley's machine, even though Curley never had much of a machine. When the mayor of the city mentions Melnea Cass, a fixture in Boston's black community, a young reporter, complete with tape recorder, looks up and asks, "Who?"

The new breed is bright and tough. More important, because many of them are from outside Massachusetts, they are willing to take on the sacred cods. They could be the best thing that ever happened to journalism in Boston. But they get precious little guidance from their bosses. Three-quarters of the way into the 20th century, the newspaper and television news businesses train their employees in the background, politics, economics and history of their coverage areas less than the Fuller Brush Company trains its door-to-door salesmen.

So, despite the recent gush of muckraking stories about campaign contributions and sheriff's expenditures, much of what does and does not happen in Greater Boston still goes uncovered.

For example, people in the conservative community of Winthrop fight for METCO and take a beating from both their own neighbors and from some half a hundred members of ROAR who cross the East Boston line to fight the voluntary, one-way busing program. Appeals to the big city press for coverage are generally ignored.

A handful of good-government types in the corrupt city of Revere raise questions about a multi-million dollar waterfront renewal project, and the press all but overlooks it.

A municipal election will be held soon in the beleaguered city of Chelsea, but there is precious little in the press to help Chelsea residents figure out who stands for what.

North Shore communities are forced by state regulations to close their open dumps and sign 20-year contracts with a firm holding a monopoly on approved refuse disposal, but to read or watch the press, one would never know why and how such a situation came to be. Nor does one really know how the new state building code regulations are affecting relatively new and usually underfunded day care centers in communities. Nor can one really figure out how all the budget cutting up on Beacon Hill is affecting any given family in city or suburb — if, indeed, it is.

It has been more than two years since hundreds of Mattapan residents crowded into the meeting room of St. Angela's Parish and pleaded with *Globe* executives for fair coverage of that racially changing neighborhood, two years since one heard *Globe* executives reassure those people that the *Globe* would not

Continued on page 6

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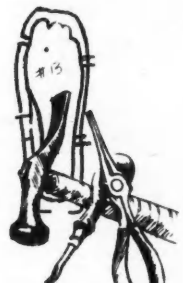

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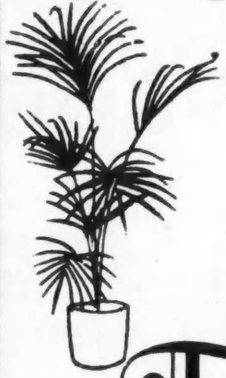

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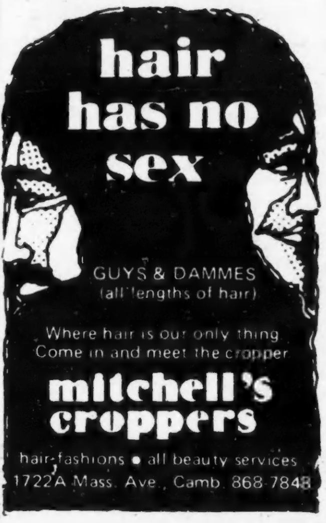

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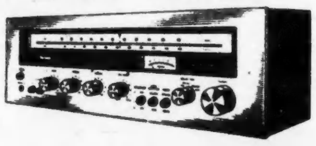

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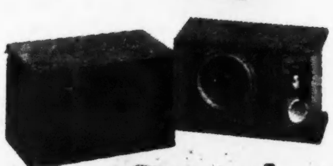

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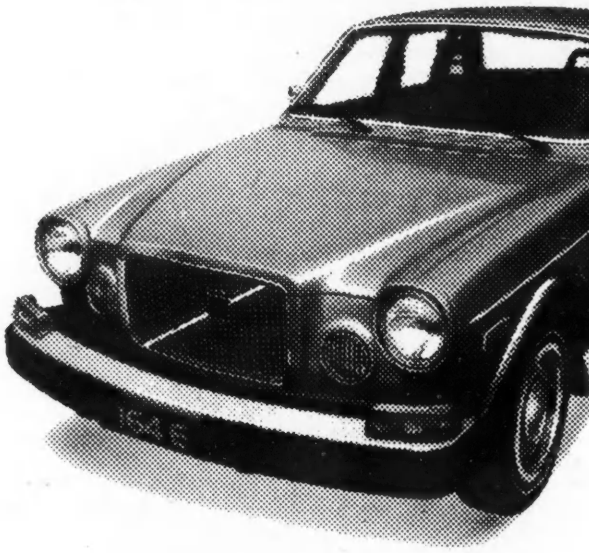

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Neglect

Continued from page 4

abandon the city. Yet the neighborhoods go uncovered.

It has been almost two years since a live televised critique of television news at Channel 4, which heard a young black Dorchester woman say, "I don't see myself in your programing" and a Southie kid say, "The only time you guys come down to Southie is for the St. Patrick's Day parades or if we are throwin' stones at a bus with black kids in it."

All over metropolitan Boston, citizens still wait in vain for a newspaper reporter or a broadcast journalist to show up and pay attention to them. If history is a teacher, the citizenry should not hold its breath.

Of Boston's press, newsman Peter Braestrup wrote 15 years ago: "It would be hard to find any large American city that has been less adequately served by its daily newspapers."

In their book *The Compleat Politician*, political scientists Murray Levin and George Blackwood quoted a campaign manager for Chub Peabody: ". . . I picked up all three Boston morning papers last Saturday, and I learned that a 16-year-old girl had been raped in Indiana. I learned who was leading in the four-ball tournament in the Myopia Country Club. I learned about a shark biting a man off the New Jersey coast, but there was not one line in any of the papers that would give you any indication that 10 days hence the voters of this state were going to go to the polls and select the nominees for the United States Senate, for governor or other state offices . . . . I don't feel that they devote adequate time and use the best men to ferret out the facts of the campaign . . . ."

When the North End was fighting the federal government three years ago for a waterfront park, it finally took a press release by Fred Langone on official City Council stationery to bring some of the press down to the neighborhood, where picketing had been going on for days. And the only time *all* the press showed up was when the embattled federal agency called a press conference. "What do we have to do," a North Ender asked, "burn somethin' down?"

What Boston's press considers news is difficult to define, as difficult to define, perhaps, as the press ethics in this town. John Fox's proposed holy war with godless Russia was really not outrageous, given that its practitioners were quick and eager to take "suggestions" from such great editors as Filene's, Jordan's, Cardinal O'Connell or just about any Brahmin business type who might collar a publisher and suggest that certain stories should, perhaps, not be written.

In the 1950s reporters from the Providence papers revealed that reporters in Boston were accepting favors from sports and political figures, moonlighting for them, doing publicity for them. And why not? The reporters were paid next to nothing, and consorting with those you cover was an activity not unknown to their bosses. The 1950s and 1960s saw publishers working with downtown interests for renewal programs, and the coverage of the destruction of the West End and the New York Streets area of the South End read like a crusade for development, rather than a treatment of complex issues. It is ironic, is it not, that the *Christian Science Monitor*, hot for urban renewal, has sponsored a massive development in the Fenway-Back Bay and that the *Herald-Traveler* plant rose on the ruins of the New York Streets.

Competition among the *Herald-Traveler*, *Record*, *American*, *Post*, *Globe* and *Transcript* for limited downtown advertising bucks produced front pages full of ads and a very flexible definition of news. As late as 1968, the *Globe*, which led Boston's newspapers in removing all ads from Page One, was still parceling out to its rewrite men daily piles of news releases labeled 'JFR Must," JFR being the initials of a very important advertising executive. The pap, extolling the virtues of a summer suit sale at Filene's or displaying the latest model at a local auto dealer's, were to be rewritten in English and placed in the news columns.

As the competition died off, as the Taylor family and Tom Winship and a handful of others at the *Globe* began turning that newspaper around, the quality of journalism actually improved in Boston. "Get outta town, kid," a hardened *Record-American* rewrite man once told a copy boy aspiring to become a reporter, "Boston is small-town journalism. They get a two-car accident here, they put it on the front page."

The copy boy took the rewrite man's advice. Years later, when he decided to return to Boston and work for the new, exciting *Globe*, Ian Menzies, then managing editor of that paper, told him, "A few years ago, you'd walk into this city room and see guys with their feet up on the desks, playing cards and reading the papers. Not any more."

It was, for the most part, true. With fewer papers in town, journalism in Boston is not only better than it was, but it is better than what passes for journalism in other cities. The once glorious names in the business — the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, the *Kansas City Star*, the *Baltimore Sun* — are stale papers, pale shadows of their once great reputations. A reading of out-of-town newspapers in the Boston Public Library will easily document why *Time* picked the *Globe* as one of the top major papers in the country.

This is of little consolation to consumers of the media in Greater Boston. It is like saying "Boston is more livable than Detroit." Which is true. But if your mother was mugged in Boston, you are not happier that it didn't happen in Detroit. No matter how well the *Globe* ranks against other papers, much of what happens in Boston, or in Chelsea or Weymouth or Newton or Melrose or in the state itself, is not covered by the local press.

When the press turns out its own crowds of reporters and, in the case of television, technicians to cover Carson Beach or Mission Hill, it is doing something very rare: it is sending reporters to Carson Beach and Mission Hill. Sadly, the North Ender was right, as was the Kerner Commission report: the press responds to you when you are causing an awful lot of noise and trouble.

Even raising a stink today — picketing, dumping garbage, whatever — even those techniques no longer assure the arrival of the press. No highly paid public relations men represent the average citizen. Few rooms equipped with enough voltage to handle television cameras are available for those average citizens to conduct press conferences. Those who do attract the press to a neighborhood or civic press conference rarely see the press again. Initiative and follow-up have never been encouraged or rewarded by those in charge of the news business.

In abandoning the stifling parochialism of the old beat system, Boston's version of the New Journalism has gone to the other extreme. It has seemingly cut itself off from traditional sources of news and from the very people who most need the attention of the press.

Just as most news executives and personnel have moved to the suburbs, so too have much advertising and readership and many viewers. The *Globe*, *Boston Magazine*, Channel 2, the two alternative weeklies and even the commercial television stations are more "cosmopolitan" than parochial in content, tone and appearance. While people from Southie and Dorchester picket the *Globe* in hate and frustration, people in Concord and Lexington and Wayland and Wellesley install little blue mailfoxes labeled "*Boston Globe*" on their lawns.

Ironically, the shoddy system of news coverage — which is really no system at all — has done as little for those suburbs and their concerns as it has for the older communities. For example, while competent reporters trip over one another at the State House, not one is to be found regularly at the state office buildings, where bureaucrats, by their very actions or inaction, affect us as much as any legislative committee or governor.

Communities and the bureaucracy are not the only ones ignored. The real powers — business and labor and how they influence government — are rarely covered. As just about everywhere else in the nation, in Boston the press has long ignored the very people with whom publishers and station executives have been known to hobnob.

The result of all this is that corporation executives and their lobbyists rarely worry about the press. The average neighborhood leaders, rarely seeing the press in their communities, have no faith in it. And the serious bureaucrats and more sophisticated pols, hardly ever seeing the press at the nuts-and-bolts agencies and meetings, have no respect for it.

And despite the press cliches of lazy civil servants and venal pols, there *are* hundreds of people in government who would welcome a tougher press in Greater Boston.

These people say privately that for all the media in Boston today, for all the radio and television stations, for all the daily and weekly newspapers, "it hasn't happened unless you read it in the *Globe*." Such people do not necessarily respect the *Globe*. They fear it, for it is big and powerful. "Look what the *Globe* did to John Davoren!" they still exclaim, long after the paper's revelations and editorials about the former Massachusetts Secretary of State.

To them, the *Monitor* is respectable, often accurate and of little value because of its minute Massachusetts readership. To them, the *Herald* simply no longer counts, a sad commentary on what was once the most influential newspaper in the state. They do not talk about *Boston* Magazine or Channel 2, despite the high caliber of coverage at the latter. They often confuse the *Phoenix* with the *Real Paper* ("*The Real Phoenix*"). People at City Hall and the State House will read one or both weeklies, usually for Dave O'Brian's tips and gossip, but they do not take either paper very seriously. Each paper still labors under the once-deserved reputation of being propaganda sheets for the Left. Rightly or wrongly, pols and neighborhood leaders look at the two alternative weeklies and see more of those new faces to whom they must explain their inner workings and behavior.

Their attitudes toward television are even more revealing of the problems inherent in the local press. Television news here, as most everywhere, is recording more than reporting. Stories are skimpy and confusing, with little background to explain to the viewer what in hell the reporter is reporting on in the first place. Reporters and producers at all three commercial stations have made valiant efforts at enterprise, but they are swallowed up by a medium which demands mush and pap and their efforts are too often one-shot deals, not necessarily in prime time and with no follow-up.

Most of the public gets its first news from television, and a frightening number get it from television *only*. Yet the more sophisticated pols worry least about television. They learn how to manipulate it instead, usually through media events. When former Gov. Frank Sargent wanted to sign a bill dealing with the Harbor Islands, he did so on a boat, rather than call the camera crews into his office. It became a big film story. Maybe it deserved to be, but its news value was not what made it big — the gimmickry did it.

A few months ago, some pols got together on a consumer program and held a press conference. The cameras whirred diligently, all at the same time, as though one mindless robot were directing the efforts of all three stations, and hardly a tough question was asked, even though the proposed program raised some. As the pols left the event, one of them mumbled with a smile, "That was a *gift*." Free publicity.

Yet the man who runs the news at Channel 7 can say, apparently straight-faced, on a house ad showing his cameramen in action, that the cameras of that station show you the news. Any reporter worthy of the name knows that most news is not what takes place before a camera, but what takes place behind closed doors. To ferret it out requires reporters, tough editors, a good deal of care and time and a sense of history and consistency.

Such commodities require a commitment, which, in turn, means a willingness to spend money. Getting publishers and station executives to spend money was hard enough before the recession and the spiraling costs of newsprint. Now, it may be impossible.

If news is nothing more than an issue awaiting the arrival of a reporter, there are thousands of news stories in Greater Boston that never see the light of a camera and never feel the touch of a reporter's pen.

Instead, television executives pass the buck for such stories to the big newspapers. They, in turn, pass it on to the smaller community papers, which are even less able or willing to take on the sacred cows and issues that warrant coverage.

A commitment of money and a valid system of reporting the news are all that is needed for any of the local media to live up to its responsibilities to the people of Greater Boston. The system should combine fresh, new outlooks of those who would throw up at a "JFR Must" with the best of the beat reporters. The press in Boston must return to the people. The news must flow up from the streets, not down from an occasional bright idea at an editors' luncheon — and it must flow into a system that is ready and able to assign priorities to that news.

It will take more than token "ethnic" or "neighborhood" access programs on a Sunday morning TV show, more than occasional in-depth treatments of a given issue or community or personality. And if the commitment comes, it will mean that somebody living near Carson Beach and someone living up at the Mission Hill projects will have somebody to call at the *Globe* or the *Herald* or the *Phoenix* or the *Real Paper* or whatever, someone to call and talk to *before* the next conflagration.

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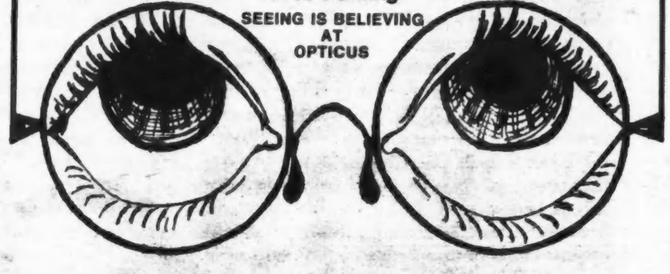

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School Daze: Two Case Studies in Media Mechanics

At the Globe, *a cool day for medium hot; at Channel 7, a hot day for medium cool*

By Edwin Diamond

A few years back, the cameraman Haskell Wexler made a motion picture called *Medium Cool.* A love story of sorts, shot in and around the real events of the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago, *Medium Cool* never was shown much in theaters, and soon dropped from sight. But it was a memorable film, with one particularly memorable line. The male protagonist, a TV cameraman himself, is watching a newscast of Mayor Daley's police gassing and clubbing youthful street demonstrators; oblivious to all the pain and the big "issues," the protagonist murmurs, "Gee, I like to shoot film . . . ."

Medium Cool's message that media people really like to "shoot film" — that is, get caught up in the process of covering big, exciting events, independent of the outcome and, indeed, the meaning of these events — has been underlined any number of times since Chicago '68. It is by now a cliche that the big media have become a not so secretly willing part of the big events they cover. Who can imagine the national political conventions without Cronkite and Chancellor and the television cameras? Or the Watergate investigations without the leaked newspaper stories?

Most recently, beginning in early September, the news media became part of the "story" of school desegregation in Boston. Newspaper and magazine reporters, camera people and television crews (with technicians much like Wexler's protagonist) were out in such large numbers — according to one count, the Massachusetts state police issued some 800 sets of press credentials, including more than 200 to out-of-town media people — that their movements were almost as exhaustively transcribed as those of the police, the city officials, the School Committee, the parents and the children. In fact, the watchers were so numerous that they were themselves watched by these principle actors in the Boston school drama — as well as by each other.

All of this creates a certain self-consciousness. It doesn't require a critic of the press to remind the news executives at the top and the news gatherers on the streets, in Boston and nationally, that their presence "shooting film" inevitably influences the events they are covering. They understand that they have become part of the "busing story." The more conscientious and professional the journalists are, the more their concern is directed to this *media effect.* Editorial decisions are made every day at the newspapers and television stations. In the school story these decisions generally include: how to plan the day's news coverage, where to deploy reporters and crews, the weight to give various events and which specific images — that is, pictures, words, type sizes and graphic iconography — to select from all of the available collected materials. These decisions are not made in a sterile vacuum, like some NASA clean room for examining moon rocks. Rather, they are made "in an existing institutional structure controlled by certain organizational imperatives that provide models of performance." In plain English, editors tell reporters and others what to do based on the way things were done before; and reporters carry out duties with the same past experiences in mind.

This attention to organization introduces an "objectivity" — or "bias," depending on your point of view — into the coverage. The personal preferences of the reporters, the "higher policy" of management and, indeed, the very *content* of the story all become secondary to the *process:* "shooting film."

On the first day of school in Boston, a few of us at the News Study Group in the political science department at MIT asked for and received permission from two Boston news organizations to let us observe their decision making from the inside. We were allowed access to the newsrooms of the *Boston Globe* in one case and the assignment desk and studios of WNAC-TV (Channel 7) in the other. The general theme of our project was to see how two important — but contrasting — Boston news organizations covered one day of the story of school desegregation. As a check on our inside observations, the News Study Group also had one observer at the Information Center run by the Boston schools and a second observer out on the streets. We were all aware, naturally, of the corridor of mirrors we were helping to construct as we became yet another row of watchers watching the watchers.

What we learned on Monday, September 8, 1975, follows, first at the *Globe* and next at Channel 7.

A well-known media critic and author of The Tin Kazoo, *a book about TV news to be published next month by MIT Press, Edwin Diamond is a commentator for the* Post-Newsweek *stations, a contributing editor of* New York *Magazine and a visiting lecturer at MIT, where he heads the political science department's News Study Group. Given all this activity, it's no wonder that this account of Boston busing coverage would have been impossible without the valuable research and reporting of Michael McNamee, Nicole Baker, Florence Davis and Paul E. Schindler, members of the News Study Group.*

At the *Globe:* A Study in Contrasts

Bob Phelps arrived at his office in the newsroom of the *Boston Globe* about 9:35 on Monday morning, slightly later than normal. "I didn't come in early today," he told the interviewer in his office. "Last year, I came in at about 6:30. This year, I deliberately didn't come in early."

Phelps, one of the *Globe*'s two assistant executive editors, had directed the paper's coverage of the first day of busing in Boston in 1974 as metropolitan editor. This year, he was slightly removed from the street coverage. On opening day last year, six persons were arrested after a bus was stoned in South Boston. "We're not planning to fight last year's war," Phelps said. The *Globe*'s strategy this year, he said, would be to provide blanket coverage of the schools and the school day — but to stay loose enough and keep enough reporters free to cover the city after school, late at night when Phelps "had a hunch" the action would start to occur. "But we're not depending on my hunches," he added. Last year, too, the word had spread throughout Boston and, eventually, the nation that the *Globe,* the *Herald American* and the area TV stations had made an "agreement" with City Hall to play down or suppress stories of violence. Other critics had said that the paper had "too much policy" — too many directives from editors, too many discussions of how the story should be covered. Last year, Tom Winship, the editor of the *Globe,* had issued a 13-point memo "To All Hands on the Boston School Opening." He had emphasized, among other things, the importance of checking out rumors and tips, the need to be inconspicuous and to stand back from any outbreaks to avoid the appearance of encouraging them, the importance of avoiding code words or inflammatory descriptions ("cruel," "savage" or "brutal"). Was there any "policy" this year? Phelps visibly bristled: "There's been no 'cooperation' at the *Globe* with anyone, and there certainly weren't any suggestions for collaboration from the *Globe.*"

After a brief meeting with Winship and some of the paper's business staff, Phelps wandered out into the newsroom, stopping to talk with a reporter about to go out on a Dorchester assignment wearing her boyfriend's fatigue jacket over an orange shirt. Phelps laughed — "camouflage and a day-glo, too," he noted — and walked off, heading for the Metropolitan desk.

Jeff McLaughlin, the metro editor, detailed the plans for the day: 36 reporters out on the streets, a large bank of rewrite men and editors to take the memos the reporters bring in and turn them into finished copy, McLaughlin himself and two of his assistants to review all the memos as they come in. McLaughlin stressed that he wanted "neighborhood-by-neighborhood" reports on the first day, paralleling the *Globe's* earlier series of reports on Boston neighborhoods and their reactions to busing. Phelps questioned McLaughlin — would there be enough people on late shifts if something broke out at night? Who was going to get attendance figures? Who was at City Hall? How much space would be needed for the stories?

"The *Globe* is very cost-conscious — we have to be," Phelps said to the interviewer. "We'd like to have some more space sometimes, and we have to hold down on overtime, but we realize what the restrictions are. I wouldn't call busing a subject where we'd take a 'to hell with the cost' attitude, but we're covering it thoroughly without incurring a whole lot of extra costs, and if we need extra expenses, we probably won't hesitate too much over them. . ."

Editors at the *Globe* normally have an 11:30 a.m. meeting, after the afternoon editions are

Timothy Carlson

David Krathwohl

Stephen Sherman

David Krathwohl

As the Globe churns: (clockwise, from top left) Robert Phelps at story conference, Tom Winship at desk, reporters in the newsroom, and out on the streets of Charlestown.

closed, to start planning for the next day's paper. Planning meetings at most newspapers usually go quickly, with each editor running over his list of stories in quick succession. Today's meeting is delayed until noon so Phelps and other editors can watch the 11:30 briefing at the Information Center on TV. Now the meeting goes slowly and thoroughly over everything that is known about the school situation to that point. The kids have gotten into schools safely; the police "sick-out" hasn't materialized; there have been some arrests in Southie, 74 members of the Committee Against Racism who wanted to "welcome" the students to school; attendance is down, but most people believe the drop is due to parents' fears for their children's safety; there have been a number of mix-ups, buses late to pick-up points or not arriving at all. Phelps listened to the reports, suggested a story idea — why not a sidebar on the mix-ups, call it "sidelights." He wanted to know details — what are the attendance figures for "others": Spanish kids . . . Chinese kids? The general view of the busing day begins to emerge.

Phelps asked if anyone has seen Jimmy Breslin. Breslin was brought in for a salary reported at $2000 a week to do his special kind of column. This caused newsroom grumbling; some reporters were saying their own neighborhood reports were as good as Breslin's. Phelps said he was on vacation in Ireland when Breslin was hired; but that he hoped for better copy from him for Tuesday's paper. Someone said Breslin had gone to Charlestown, and there was some apprehension that the *Globe*'s own Breslin-style columnist, Jeremiah Murphy, also in Charlestown, might pick the same topic as Breslin to write on. Breslin, however, found a black teenager who was being bused to Charlestown after being bused to Southie last year ("a civil rights veteran"), and easily left the hometown talent far behind.

Phelps began to ask other questions. What's the difference between this year and last? Keep that in mind, he suggested to McLaughlin, keep thinking about a "contrast" story. Are people going out late at night now to go to the theater and movies? he asked the arts editor. What about police protection? The police have pledged to keep protection up throughout the city, but will the drain of busing have an effect? Some of these questions yield stories — the contrast piece was the second lead in Tuesday's paper — but others don't pan out.

The meeting turned to other news. Phelps wanted to keep from repeating what he considered one of the *Globe*'s major mistakes last year, when the paper concentrated on busing almost to the exclusion of the rest of the world. There should be other news on page one, and page three, the *Globe*'s "inside front page," should have no busing news on it all, if possible, Phelps said. But the news day isn't cooperating. There's little else going on in the city or the nation, except for desegregation news — in Louisville as well as Boston. Wyman and Durkin are starting a series of debates in their second-chance New Hampshire Senate race, a piece which might be worthy of page one, but there is little else to "balance out" the paper.

After brief reports from other departments — one of the sports editors claimed that no one will be out rioting because both the Red Sox and Patriots are playing Monday night, the Patriots on national TV — the meeting broke up. Phelps ate lunch at his desk.

The *Globe* has a helicopter that will be flying over the schools. But Phelps missed out; Winship got the last available seat on the chopper. (Later in the week, at a private seminar at Harvard to review the desegregation coverage, a questioner chided a TV network news executive for television's "overly conspicuous" role. The choppers gave the whole thing the look of war, of Vietnam, the network man replied, but TV wasn't up there flying around, the *Globe* was. And anyway, he added, you can't get good pictures from a chopper.)

Phelps decided to take a quick driving tour of the city. In an unmarked company car he and two assistant metro editors drove up to Charlestown, where they stood outside the police line around the school. It was about 2:45. Suddenly, a row of buses came up Monument Hill, with police motorcycles and cars between each bus. The scene was generally quiet, although a few blocks away youths had turned over and burned four cars.

The tour continued — past Boston English, through Dorchester, up and down Mission Hill, and finally to South Boston. Everywhere, it was quiet. Phelps and the assistant metro editors kept comparing this day with last year, pointing out where the crowds were last year, where the buses were stoned, where the arrests occured. Two blocks from the school, kids were playing ball in the narrow street and had to stop to let the *Globe* editors through — "cops," one kid told another. Phelps kept comparing with last year; the comparison story was growing in his mind.

Back in the newsroom again, Phelps sat down at the metro copydesk to review the memos coming in from reporters. A directive from McLaughlin had called for "story-quality writing" and a wealth of details; but most of the memos were not story-quality, and details were somewhat sparse. Phelps read each of about 20 memos. He asked one of his aides to start notifying editors for a meeting at five o'clock.

At the meeting, McLaughlin had a list of slugs for stories, ranging from the overall story slugged "city" to a series of shorts slugged "sidelights." Tom Winship, who was in only at the end of the noon meeting, came in after about three minutes and sat through the entire meeting, offering a few suggestions but generally leaving it up to Phelps.

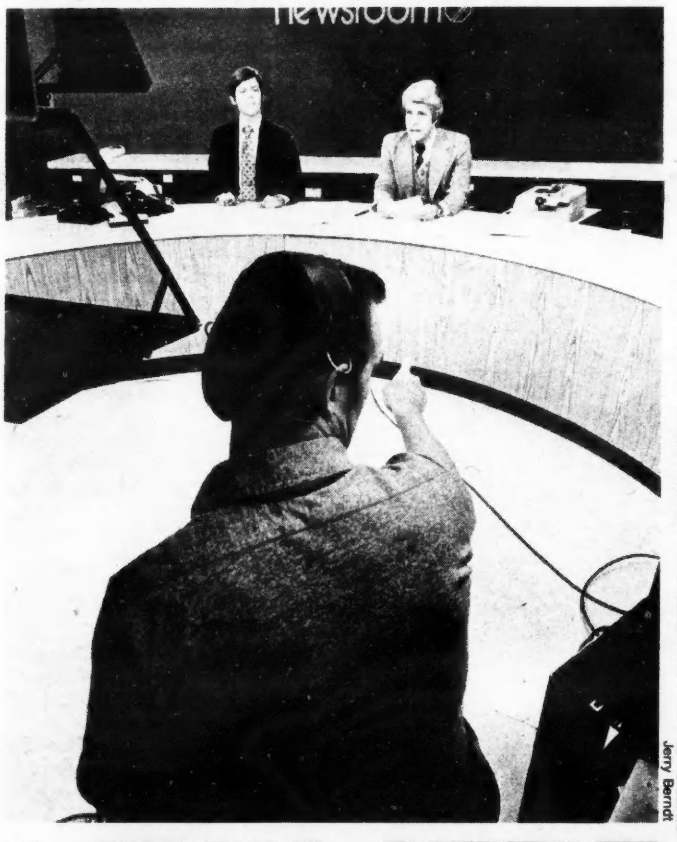
The "city" story has grown to be one big piece wrapping up the basic story — the attendance, the arrests, with references to the "foul-ups" and neighborhood details that would be covered more thoroughly in the sidebars. The "contrast" story, however, was the one they were worrying the most about. Phelps was very interested in this story, and he wanted it right — he was even asking for a contrast between the weather on opening day '74 and '75. He, McLaughlin and the metro assistants batted around names to write the story for several minutes, finally agreeing to assign Ken Hartnett. They were looking for a writer who could do a mood piece, but also wanted to be sure that he'd been on the street and had seen action himself. The other stories were fairly quickly disposed of — "neighborhoods," "problems," "table" (of attendance), "sidelights," "reaction" (from officials). But then Winship spoke up during the discussion of a story slugged "schools." He wondered: were the schools ready and did any education occur, did things get done? Winship wanted to weave that story into "neighborhoods," but Phelps and McLaughlin held out for separate stories. Phelps said they would try to weave the stories together, but if they didn't go together, they'd split them and run them separately. As it turned out, "schools" ran alone. There were a total of 17 slugs, counting each of the several neighborhood briefs.

Phelps: "We can't hope to beat TV and radio for the spot news leads, so we've got to offer something they won't have. That's why we're stressing the sidebars, the 'contrast' and 'neighborhood' stories and Breslin. That's why I want a historical lead on the main story, something to give it a sense of why and where and perspective."

After brief reports from the rest of the world — though trying for "balance" in the paper, the editors found busing predominates everywhere — the meeting broke up. Phelps and McLaughlin then conferred on rewrite assignments. Outside the conference room, Winship said, "I hope you can understand the concern and care we've got to use on this story. We've lived with this for more than a year, and I think we reflect the tensions and concerns that you'd find in the community."

Added Phelps: "There's

Continued on page 10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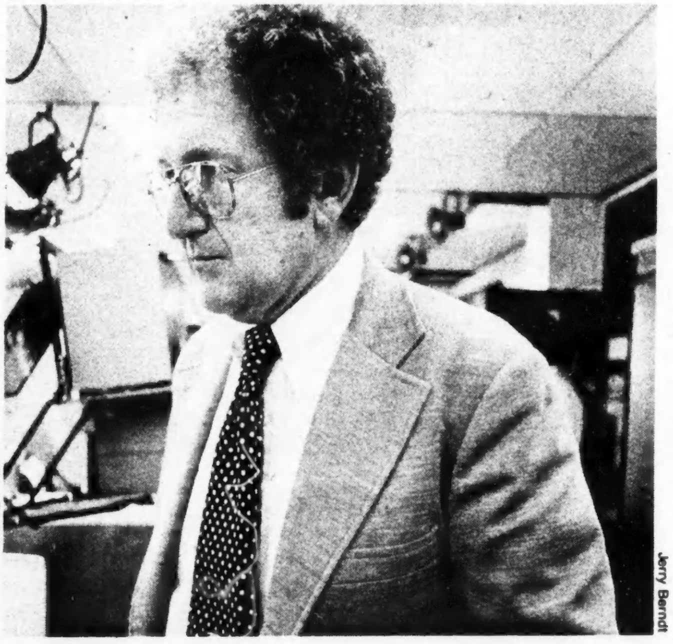
Jerry Berndt

Jerry Berndt

David Krathwohl

7 up: (clockwise) a technical director signals the start of NAC's first hour-long news broadcast as Mel Bernstein, news director, looks on, off-camera. In Charlestown for a press conference with the high school principal is reporter Steve Shepard (in white sweater); in the broadcast booth, a director supervises the telecast.

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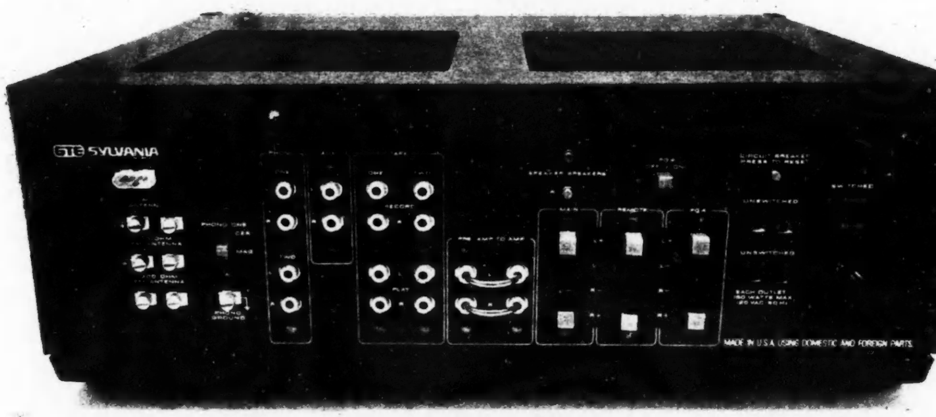

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*Popular Electronics, December 1974 issue.

GTE SYLVANIA

Busing

Continued from page 9

always a danger that an editor will over-impose on a story. I'm trying to walk a thin line between that and having a story appear in the paper that we won't like to read tomorrow. . ."

*

It is now 6 p.m. Phelps agreed to discuss the process so far, although he said "the big decisions are yet to come; we've just started. . ." But he quickly added: "Now is when we have to start pushing. We all hate to make decisions, because something might happen and change things. But we have to start getting things on paper, and then change them if we're forced to, if we change our minds. . ."

The MIT observer, Mike McNamee, had some questions.

McNamee: "Is this usual *Globe* practice for writing — taking files and having all rewrite?"

Phelps: "This isn't our usual practice, but it's not that far from it. We do edit in a different fashion from most newspapers. We no longer send a reporter out on a story or have him get a story of his own beat, then come in and write it without consulting with someone on the desk. Instead, we aim for a 'dialogue' with reporters — we consult with them when they go out on the story, when they come back with it and after they write the lead or first take. We think that brings out more in the reporting, to be able to have the editors suggest angles and ideas as the story is being produced, instead of being stuck with a finished story. We want this to be a reporter's newspaper, but one where the editors are involved, too."

"What happens as time goes on, if the desegregation story stays calm and peaceful?"

"Well, we'll clearly go down on staff — you don't assign as many people when the story gets smaller. . . . I expect you'll see fewer action stories and more think pieces, analytical pieces, as time goes on."

"What about the blanketing effects? Usually, people are more concerned about TV, but print reporters have an effect, too."

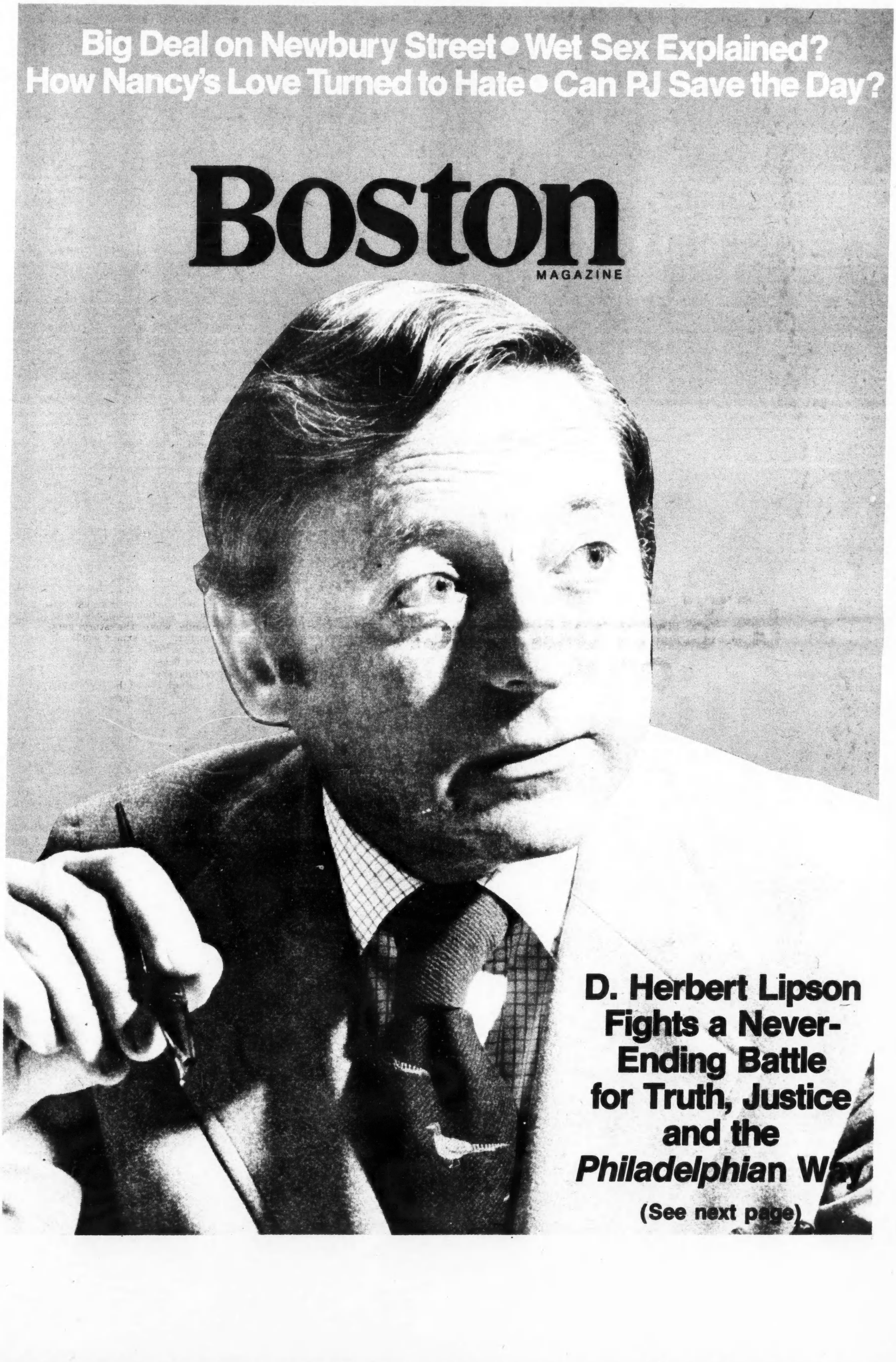
"It distresses me that the presence of our reporters would make someone want to perform, would change the events at the scene. I've only heard of one incident today where the reporters got into the story. [There had been a rumor that an NBC panel truck had been fired at; later, a black reporter from *Newsday* was assaulted.] We try to keep our reporters from being in the story, but we won't jeopardize our chances of getting the story. . ."

The next morning, Tuesday, September 9, the *Globe* front page reflected the deliberations of the previous day. The bottom of the page was for balance — an article on the Red Sox, a short story on New York City's financial problems and the third part of a *Globe* series on a Boston financier's alleged suicide. The top of the page, however, was all busing. On the right, the main story stressed the quietness of the schools and the massive police presence. On the left was the "contrast" story Phelps has been so concerned about. Jimmy Breslin's commentary, a story detailing official reaction to the first day of school, and a story on the fire at John F. Kennedy's birthplace in Brookline filled out the page.

At Newsroom 7: Staying Tuned In

September 8th was a big day for Channel 7. The evening news program was increased from 30 minutes to 60 minutes. This meant it goes head to head with the hour-long news on WBZ

Continued on page 20



Big Deal on Newbury Street • Wet Sex Explained?
How Nancy's Love Turned to Hate • Can PJ Save the Day?

Boston
MAGAZINE

D. Herbert Lipson Fights a Never-Ending Battle for Truth, Justice and the *Philadelphian* Way

(See next page)

Where's *Boston*?

By Dave O'Brian

Delmar Herbert Lipson does not think much of the city that made him what he is today. "This is a town," Lipson said in an interview a year ago, "where mediocrity has been the rule."

He was referring to Philadelphia, and thus was not saying anything that had not been said earlier and better by W.C. Fields. But we here in the self-styled Hub of the Universe have reason to feel insulted by Lipson's remarks. Because in the very same interview he offered his theory that one city is essentially like another.

And there's the rub. D. Herbert Lipson, you see, tries to fill a dual role. He is publisher of both *Philadelphia*, one of the real success stories amid the proliferation of city magazines over the past decade, and *Boston*, a slick publication that has been notably unsuccessful in duplicating *Philadelphia*'s winning, if flashy, formula. "Herb," says one of Lipson's ex-editors, "has never lived anywhere but Philadelphia, so he thinks that's the world."

There is no one simple reason why the Lipson combination of sleek, sexy covers and chic, trendy articles that made *Philadelphia* rich has not been nearly as successful here. Since Lipson inherited the innocuous, non-profit Chamber of Commerce bulletin from his father in 1955, *Philadelphia* has become a fat, ad-packed publication which almost 100,000 buyers pick up each month. *Boston*'s circulation, however, hasn't reached 35,000 yet and ads are relatively sparse. The conventional wisdom that Boston, as the *Globe*'s Bruce McCabe once phrased it, "is not a smart-ass city," is, as we shall see, part of *Boston*'s problem — but it is not the whole story, any more than it is wholly fair or accurate to apply Lipson's "mediocrity" theory to his magazine. *Philadelphia*, under the competent editorship of Alan Halpern, made its reputation as much through aggressive, muckraking journalism as anything else. There sometimes is — or, at least, was — quality stuff hidden behind the magazine's frequently titillating covers, which are defended by Halpern as necessary to merchandise the product (though, significantly, in an issue devoted to "bad taste," *Philadelphia* once cited one of its own covers).

No, the real problem, it seems, is Lipson's philosophy and lifestyle — that and his unwillingness to let the people he hires run *Boston* without his continual interference. Though Lipson could not be reached for comment, he outlined his views in that interview a year ago in *Dun's Review*, a business journal. Expounding on his theory that what works in one city can be transported unchanged to another, Lipson said, "If we do a story on summer resorts around Philadelphia and it is a success, we can do a story on summer resorts around Boston, and it will also be a success. My only problem is with egocentric editors in Boston who don't want to go along."

Not surprisingly, *Boston* has suffered from an incredible staff turnover, which helps to explain the lack of editorial direction and the uneven quality of the magazine. Going to work there, it seems, is like frequenting dating bars: it's a great place to meet new people without ever forming any lasting relationships. The staff membership has changed repeatedly since Municipal Publications, of which Lipson is one-third owner, joined with a handful of local investors to buy the magazine from the Boston Chamber of Commerce in October of 1970. In the last three years alone, 60 staffers have passed through *Boston*'s office at 38 Newbury St., even though the staff size has never exceeded 15.

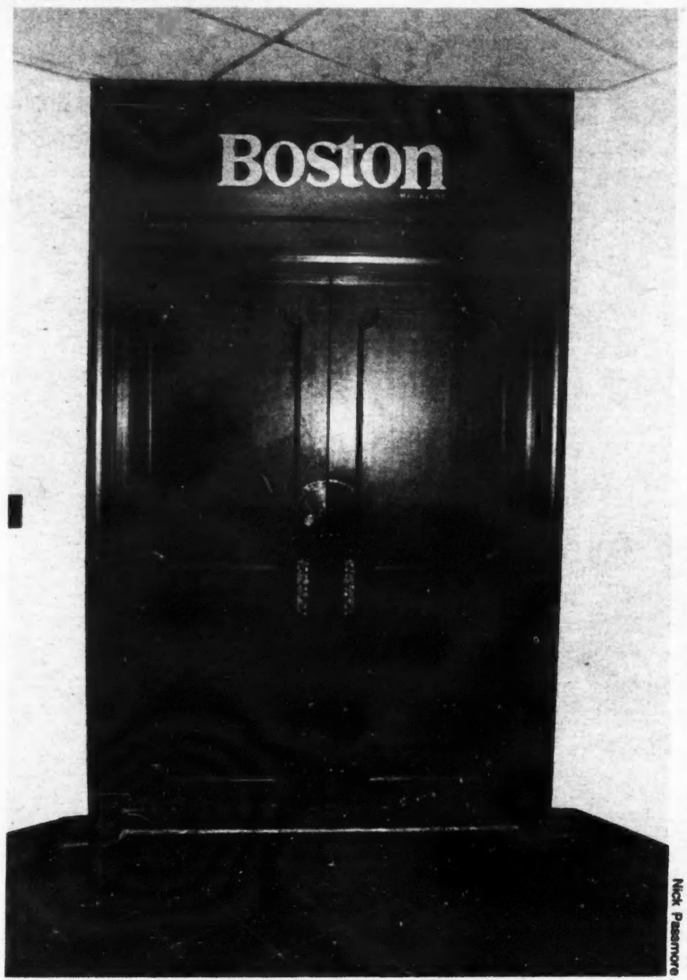
One of those who breezed through the life of the magazine was Alan Lupo. The original angry young man of Boston journalism, Lupo's fiery verbal clash with Herb Lipson, ending his one-year tenure at the monthly, was the extreme (and therefore classic) example of what Lipson meant by problems "with egocentric editors in Boston." And also the classic example of why a magazine in a unique city like Boston cannot be run out of, let alone patterned after, a magazine in a city like Philadelphia.

Lupo objected to the tendency of *Philadelphia* and *Boston*, at Lipson's urging, to do similar cover stories so they could share the same cover art, usually a model posing in a Philadelphia studio. "The only good thing about it was that it saved money," says Lupo. "But it created a psychological problem. Why should we do the same story just because they did it? There are enough issues and stories in Boston that we could have done our own thing."

Especially since the Philadelphia and Boston audiences, just about everybody but Lipson concedes, are radically different. The New England magazine reader is quite sophisticated, for one thing. Statistics show he is far more apt to be familiar with such publications as *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *The Atlantic*, the *National Lampoon* and the *New York Times Magazine* than the average Philadelphia reader. "This is a very sophisticated area," contends Lupo. "The guys who run the hokey carts and the elevators read everything and are not impressed by something slick." Even Paul Corkery, *Boston*'s current editor, who some charge has given in to Lipson's demands for trendy, substanceless journalism, agrees. "In Boston," Corkery says, "you can't afford to promise something and not deliver it. Newsstand sales fall off. If you deliver as many pieces of good writing as possible in this market, you'll do fine."

And even Alan Halpern, who has managed to put up with Lipson the 24 years he has edited *Philadelphia*, believes the two

Dave O'Brian has always been a child of the Dream, not to mention the media. He lives on borrowed time in the South End, where he can often be found wanting. He says his last book read was The Tin Kazoo, *but don't quote him.*



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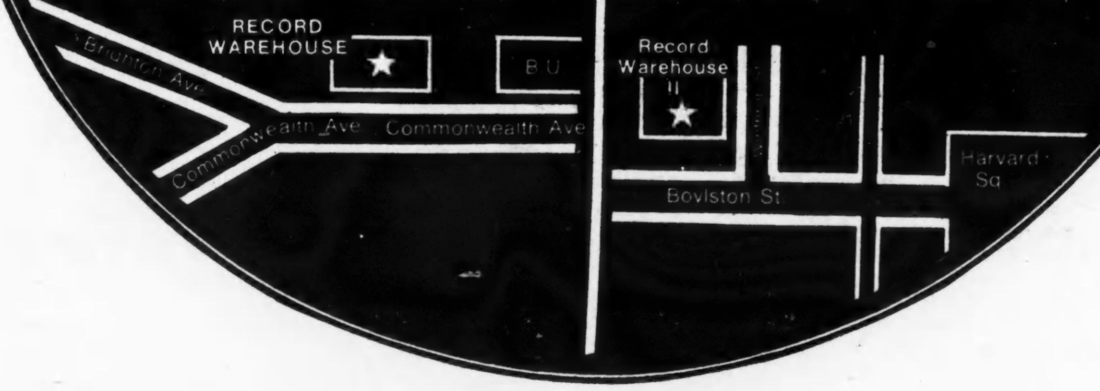


markets are substantially different. "Boston," he believes, "is younger, more academic than Philadelphia, and ethnicity is more important." He, too, disputes the Lipson theory that one city is just like another — but he contends such disagreements between editor and publisher are healthy. "He's an opinionated person," Halpern says, "but that's great. I'd hate to work for a piece of fluff. The important thing is that I'm given complete editorial freedom. Arguing with your publisher is not editorial interference. It's just one more input. A weak editor is cowed by that sort of thing. A strong editor isn't."

Halpern may not be "cowed," but neither does he always find delight in his differences with Lipson. He has quit and then gone back to the magazine maybe a dozen times — twice in the past year alone.

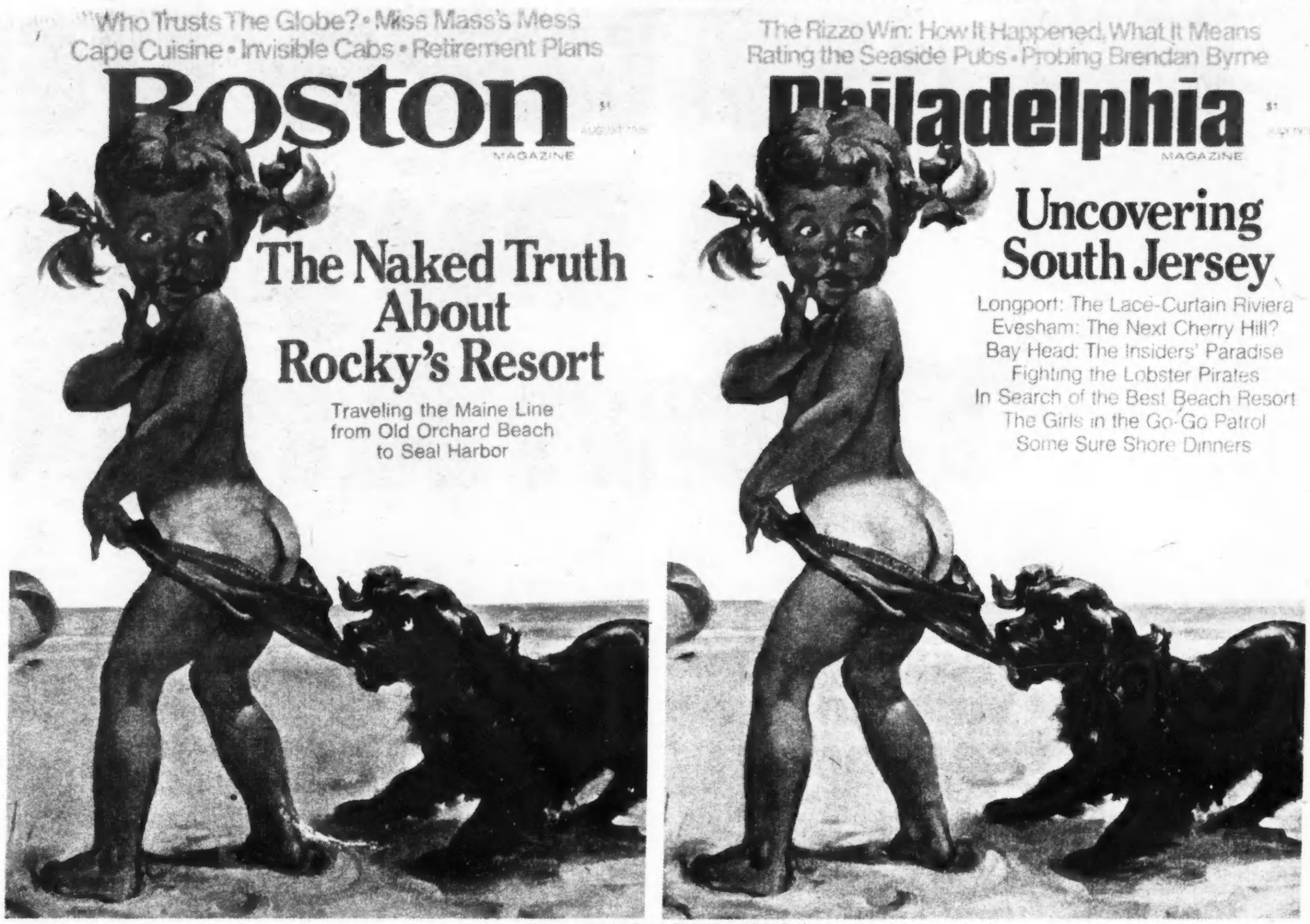
There are other basic differences, though, between the two markets that may be more to the point than this kind of backpatting over how sophisticated all us Bostonians are. And the obvious one is simply that *Philadelphia* came along and filled a void that doesn't exist in Boston journalism. The Philadelphia papers were noticeably weak (they have since improved) when *Philadelphia* drew national attention when the publication exposed a local reporter who was shaking down shady characters by threatening to report their dirty dealings, a story that actually put the guy behind bars. There were other such attention-grabbers down there, but in Boston, what with the oft-times hard-hitting approach of the alternative weeklies and the existence of the *Globe*'s Spotlight Team, the same void was simply not there. As Russell Adams, another ex-*Boston* editor, put it, "If *Philadelphia* didn't exist, it would have to be invented — but you can't say that about *Boston*. Here, the *Phoenix* and *Real Paper* do every week what a monthly can do."

The impact of the alternative papers, Adams recalls, was something Lipson would never accept. "He refused to deal with that reality because he thinks they only appeal to young people who have no money to spend."

"Lipson felt the *Phoenix* and *Real Paper* were doing plenty of — and these are his words — 'bleeding heart, underground, little people stories,' " according to Halpern. "Where Lupo, say, would be interested in a housing project that had a problem, Herb would be interested in a problem on State Street. Both Lupo and Lipson agreed that the Port Authority was worth covering, but from a different vantage point. Herb felt that the Port Authority's effect on little people was a minor problem. He was more interested in how the power is distributed."

It may well be that Lipson's interests do more closely coincide with those of the typical *Boston* Magazine reader. As a press release proudly proclaimed in 1971, "*Boston* boasts bevy of Boston's best!" Loosely translated, it meant that the relatively small readership (numbering a mere 18,412 by November 1972) was moneyed, professional, suburban and educated. A study conducted by Becker Research showed that 90 percent of *Boston*'s readers owned credit cards, 85 percent flew commercial airliners, 76 percent owned their own homes, 82 percent defined their jobs as "professional" or "managerial," and so on. As someone cracked, they might as well rename it *Dover* Magazine.

That's *who* reads it — but why? Well, Lipson seems to think that people buy city magazines to read about sex, the Kennedys, the latest "in" trend or drugs. An oversimplification, perhaps, but one that makes sense, if you consider the publisher's lifestyle.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Fighting the Lobster Pirates
In Search of the Best Beach Resort
The Girls in the Go-Go Patrol
Some Sure Shore Dinners

"One city's just like another"

Big Deal on Newbury Street

D. Herbert Lipson, who's pushing 50, dresses expensively, with a partiality to brand names such as Gucci. He tools around Philly in a Mercedes and obviously enjoys playing the role of the successful, though quite short, magazine magnate.

"Lipson's real problem is that he's kind of Napoleonic," observes Gary Griffith, a young writer from one of the more marginal city magazines, *Cleveland*, who worked at *Boston* for a while. "He's a little guy who wants power. In Philadelphia he has it, and it bothers him that no one knows him here. He wants to make it into Boston headwaiter society. In Philadelphia, by contrast, Lipson is a pillar of the community, having been named by Mayor Frank Rizzo to head a prestigious Citizens Committee to Advise the Mayor — an appointment, according to the January 1972 issue of *[MORE]*, the journalism review, which came after Lipson's "lack of enthusiasm for an article critical of his friend Rizzo led to its non-appearance in *Philadelphia*."

Lipson's tastes also lead, in the view of some, to an unwise allocation of resources. "When I met him for the first time," says Griffith, "his first question was, why didn't my typewriter match the others in the room?" The lavish *Boston* office suite is perfectly color-coordinated and the desks of staff writers and copy editors are as fancy as those of most publishers — even as freelancers complain of having to fight for every nickel of expense money owed them. "It's asinine," says Griffith, "for a magazine that is not making money to have the kind of offices that *Boston* does. But Herb would not dream of not being on fashionable Newbury Street near the Ritz." A frequent contributor to the magazine takes this observation one step further: "His whole concept of Boston begins and ends with trendy Newbury Street."

And Lipson thinks of himself as quite the ladies man. According to one ex-staffer, the publisher "carries around with him a *Philadelphia Inquirer* article making him out to be a wife-stealer. It was supposed to be a critical article, but he loves it. It would be more accurate to describe him as the type who's always trying and striking out." According to Gail Kelley, a former *Boston* intern, "a woman can't have dealings with Lipson except as a servant or on a sexual basis. He's always looking for that *Cosmo* girl."

Kelley reports that at a staff meeting Lipson complained that a Valentine's Day story "does not have enough wet sex in it. And he kept repeating that what the magazine needs is 'more wet sex.' No one wanted to ask him what wet sex is."

Another source says that Lipson insists upon a sex cover every six months. In one instance, this requirement forced the editor to throw together a bizarre cover story on "The New Sexual Etiquette," a piece that was rewritten and ended up so insubstantial that, Paul Corkery admits, "I wanted to spend the whole month with a bag over my head." And then, six months later, there was the "Happy Hooker Murders" cover, purporting to represent excerpts from hired killer Joseph Barboza Baron's book. But the excerpts contained only one fleeting reference to a hooker, and no indication whether she was happy.

Alan Lupo's favorite example of a cover story that should never even have appeared in Boston was "The Super Doctors," an April 1973 article, recycled from *Philadelphia*, listing the "best" doctors in town. The idea went over well in Philadelphia, but Lupo felt it was "a dumb story to do in a city recognized even by its critics as one of the leading medical centers in the world. To do it right, you'd have to list 700 people. And anyway, on the subject of health care, there are better stories to be done."

It is just this sort of thing, Lupo feels, that prevents *Boston* from capturing much of the distinctive flavor of this city. "*Boston*," Lupo contends, "has the air of a kind of casual visitor from Philadelphia that tries to play around at being cute and ends up being shoddy and irresponsible. It reflects, in that respect, its publisher."

Early Signs

Lipson's visits to Boston may be casual these days, but his initial entry into the wonderful world of Hub journalism was deadly serious. Like most city magazines, *Boston* began as a Chamber of Commerce organ, the progenitor of which was *Atlanta*, the first such publication of any significance. *Atlanta* was subsidized by its chamber to the tune of at least $150,000 and possibly, according to rumors, $250,000 annually, was a very flashy periodical with enormous advertising support and had the sole job of tooting Atlanta's horn, a standard chamber function. (*Houston* magazine's editor was once quoted as saying, "We just want to show Houston as a wonderful place to live in and do business in; we aren't really interested in making noise.")

The attitude of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce, though, was quite different, according to Jerrold Hickey, who came here from Macmillan Publishing to edit *Boston* in 1964, about a year after it had initially been transformed from a newsletter into a slick magazine.

While the Atlanta Chamber felt the subsidy more than paid for itself if *Atlanta* attracted at least one major industry to the city, Boston's Chamber had the rather pompous feeling that Boston needed no promotion. Consequently, Hickey says he was given complete editorial control as long as the magazine did not lose money — which he claims it did not. "We *did* break even," he said. "The first issue even made $12."

Hickey, a reserved, gray-haired, pipe-smoking gentleman, now does public relations

Continued on page 16

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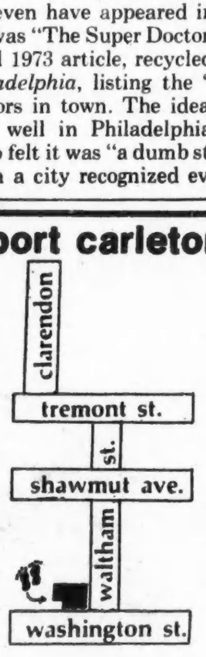

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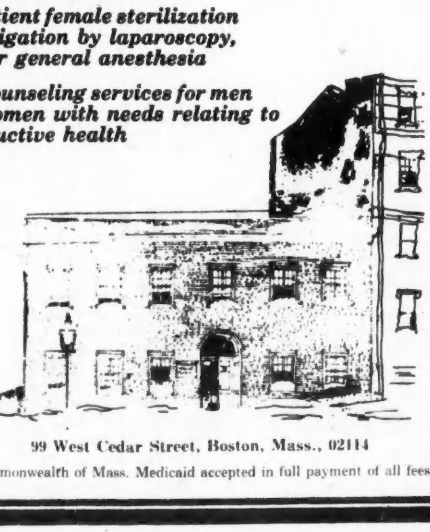

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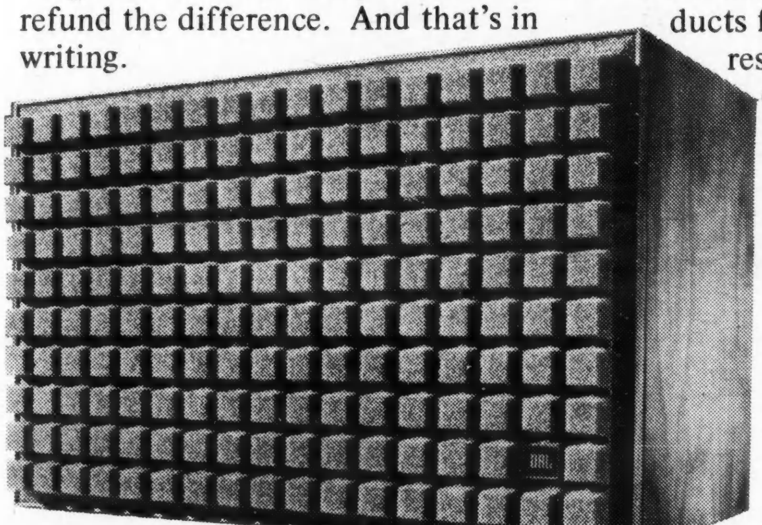

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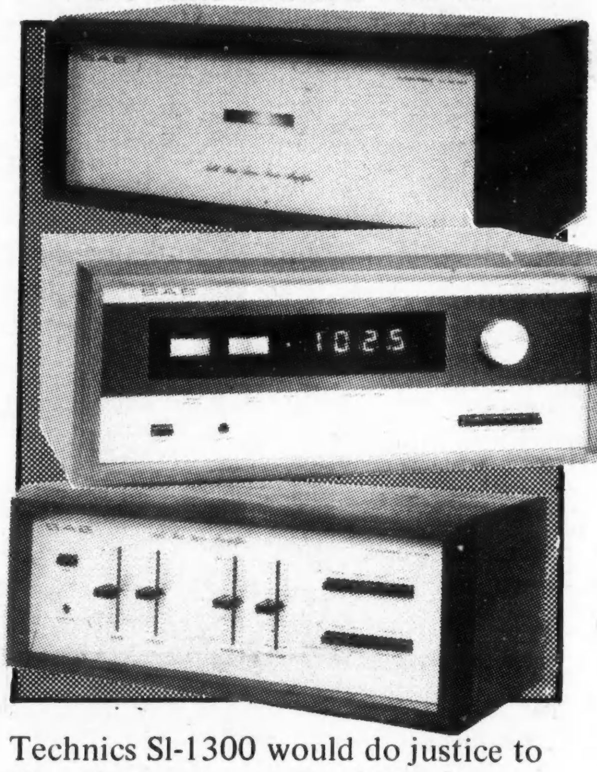

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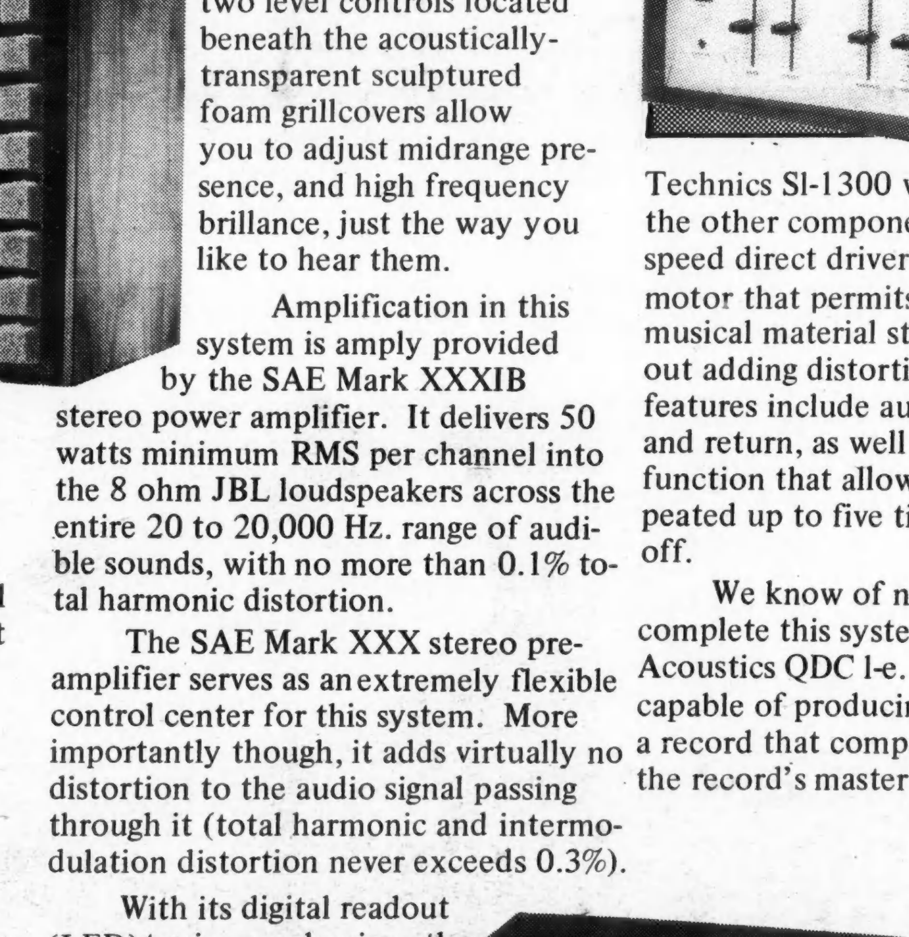

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Boston

Continued from page 13

for the Boston Housing Authority and moonlights by editing the *New Boston Review*, a quarterly which, he says proudly, also breaks even. Even though it's been nearly five years since the Chamber sold *Boston* to Herb Lipson, Hickey's bitterness still shows — mainly because, he says, the Chamber had promised *Boston* Magazine to him. Hickey, after slaving over the magazine for five years, had plans to form a book publishing company using *Boston* "as a kind of non-profit flagship."

Then the roof fell in. "Suddenly, late in 1970," Hickey remembers, "Jim Kelso [the head of the Chamber of Commerce] walked in and said he had a letter from Epstein, which is what he, in his anti-Semitic way, kept calling Lipson. A $200,000 offer for the magazine. He explained that the Chamber's dues were down and so, even though he had promised the magazine to me, he just couldn't turn down an offer like that."

The old *Cambridge Phoenix* reported at the time that Lipson's offer was the highest of three, the others reportedly a $70,000 bid from *The Atlantic* and one from Hickey nearly matching that. Hickey thinks Lipson paid way too much for the magazine — its circulation at the time was estimated at less than 7000, 2500 of which were copies mailed out free to Chamber of Commerce members. The circulation has grown over the years, of course, and since the figure of 32,000 offered in *Boston*'s current publisher's statement is audited (for the first time), it's probably reasonably accurate — but it's a far cry from the circulation figure of 100,000, at which Lipson himself believes a city magazine, according to the *Dun's Review* article, generates enough revenue to support itself. And it therefore seems that the next major step in Lipson's game plan — to buy *San Francisco* magazine — is not exactly imminent.

Lipson not only seems to have paid too much for *Boston*, he may have also received less than he thought he was bargaining for. The day Lipson took over, Hickey and his entire staff of six walked out to start a competing publication, *Bostonian*. Lipson charged that they had raided the files before they left, a charge Hickey flatly denied, but *Bostonian* did inherit *Boston*'s membership in Select Media, an organization of 20 city magazines that pooled their resources and hired a $30,000-a-year New York ad man to sell national advertising for member mags. The other members of Select Media embraced *Bostonian*, Hickey contends, as soon as they heard he was fighting Herb Lipson. Hickey claims Lipson and *Philadelphia* had once belonged to Select Media but were bounced out for failure to pay dues.

Lipson's first issue of *Boston* hit the streets in December, 1970. *Bostonian*, bankrolled by a rather eccentric real-estate speculator who had $660,000 worth of Penn Central stock, made its debut in January, 1971. And then, as all this was going on, a third slick monthly, *Metro Boston*, appeared on the newsstands. For a brief, but insane period, a city that may not even be able to support one such publication had three.

Bostonian may have been the most interesting, though it only lasted four issues, one of which had bound in a specially produced Bob and Ray record, now a valuable collector's item. But the bottom fell out of Penn Central, and *Bostonian* simply ran out of money. *Metro Boston* was lively and had the most imaginative graphics, but it was run, according to Hickey, by a bunch of "talented amateurs" who knew nothing of magazine economics. It lasted a year before folding. Lipson was, and is, the sole survivor.

The *Cambridge Phoenix* said at the time that under Hickey, *Boston* was "refined and respectable and exquisitely inoffensive." That was probably unfair, but the *Phoenix*'s hope that the new *Boston* would engage in the kind of "gutsy, probing, investigatory journalism" for which *Philadelphia* was famous was equally overoptimistic.

While *Boston* did not go out on too many limbs under the Chamber of Commerce, the issues that Hickey turned out do show real concern for quality, especially in the color cover photos of random city scenes, scenes which reflect an urban flavor that has been missing from the magazine's covers every since.

Under Lipson, the new *Boston* had a shaky start. Russell Adams, a PR man at Boston University, was editing it part-time, and Alan Halpern was rushed in from Philadelphia as a consultant to put the thing together, almost entirely from scratch. *Boston*'s contents were remarkably unpredictable and uneven from issue to issue, with a fluffy piece rating the city's bathrooms showing up one month and a solid piece on the transportation crisis the next. According to Robert Johnson, who served as Lipson's associate publisher for a time, the magazine was "losing tremendous sums of money" — as much, he insists, as $200,000 annually in 1972 and 1973. "The most troublesome thing about Lipson," Johnson, now ad director of *New England Electrical News*, says, "is that he operates by whim and whimsey. There were broken meetings, broken appointments and an obvious lack of economy. He was lucky in Philadelphia because his magazine filled a void." Johnson's negativism, like that of many others quoted in this article, could be partially attributed to his having run afoul of Lipson. In Johnson's case he was eventually canned. "Lipson should never even have had an associate publisher," Johnson says. "Only he can be the boss."

Still, Russell Adams was able to bring innovations to the magazine. His first cover story was on unemployment and, in the same issue, he wrote on Boston's dating bar scene, a real departure for the publication. Even then, *Boston* and *Philadelphia* shared cover art. Adams's second issue contained a cover story on Bruins' bad boy Derek Sanderson, who posed in mock prayer with a cigarette hanging from his mouth. When Sanderson jumped to the Philadelphia franchise of the World Hockey League, the same cover photo was recycled down there. The issues that gained the most notice under Adams, though, were those containing the "Rate the Reps" series — capsule evaluations, some devastating, of state representatives written by an anonymous politico whose name Adams still will not reveal.

Actually, Nancy Love, an editor who came to *Boston* after working for Lipson for eight years in Philadelphia, was in charge by then and Adams was executive editor. Later, he was to be told by Lipson at the Ritz that he was being dropped in favor of Alan Lupo because Lipson wanted political relevance. ("I was both hired and fired at the Ritz," Adams says.)

The Love-Lupo regime represented, in the minds of many, a renaissance of sorts for *Boston* Magazine. "When Lupo went to work there," observes Jerrold Hickey, "it began, I thought, to turn into a serious, responsible magazine that would be a real contribution to the city. Now, there's some good stuff in there, but I get no sense of an editorial focus."

Actually, Lupo and Love complemented each other quite nicely. Left to his own devices, Lupo would surely have turned *Boston* into a community newspaper. And some of Nancy's stuff — articles on "Ask Beth" and older women dating younger guys come to mind — tended to be a bit frothy. But together, they provided an interesting mix and, for once, the magazine was relevant to Boston — at least occasionally.

"I was opposed to interference from *Philadelphia*," says Love, who is now book editor at *Washingtonian* magazine, "but at the same time I had tremendous loyalty to it, having worked there for many years. And I was committed to the idea of putting together a chain of magazines. I believe many things can be done jointly. The sharing of bookkeeping and subscription fulfillment chores, for example, can be done at great savings. And some articles and covers can be shared as long as each magazine puts in its own point of view. I do object, though, to a busing cover about Boston that's done with models in Philadelphia. That's really gross."

The reference is to an issue of a year ago (*after* Nancy Love left *Boston*), whose cover supposedly depicted an Irish family from South Boston. The family was sitting in what appeared to be a very tacky living room, with one of those Kean paintings of kids with oversized, dewey eyes on the wall. The caption: "Hell no, we won't go."

Now this cover probably worked very well in the "merchan-

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dising" sense in which Lipson and his editors — at least the ones that wanted to keep their jobs — conceive of cover art. No doubt the moneyed, suburban, college-educated *Boston* reader looked at this cover and was intrigued. "Oh, isn't that wonderful? They must be Irish — look, the guy's got red hair. And God, that furniture is so *tacky*."

But the red-headed male model on the cover was Dan Rotenberg, a *Philadelphia* Magazine editor (who is rumored to be Jewish), and the other models were a *Philadelphia* secretary and her daughter.

In August, 1971, *Boston* did a cover story on Provincetown. The cover featured a girl who appeared to be smoking pot. The "girl" was a receptionist at *Philadelphia* magazine.

In July, 1974 and again in 1975, *Boston* did cover stories on "The Best and Worst of Boston." The cover art featured an accounting secretary at *Philadelphia*.

The October 1974 *Boston* cover (a fine cover design, incidentally) on "How to Stay Trim without Leaving the Office" featured *Philadelphia*'s production secretary.

The previously mentioned September 1974 *Boston* cover on "The New Sexual Etiquette" featured *Philadelphia* design director Art Spikol arm wrestling with the woman whom he happened to be having lunch with that day.

The August '74 cover story on Martha's Vineyard featured an alluring model sitting by Delaware Bay. *Boston* associate editor Geoffrey Precourt, who has since quit to become editor of *Ad East*, protested the plan to stick the girl in a scanty bikini, arguing that "Martha's Vineyard is not a tits-and-ass place." A compromise: the girl was to be placed in a tennis shirt and then dipped in the water so that, hopefully, her nipples would show through. Just one snafu, though: a tennis shirt could not be found in Philadelphia, so the girl was given a tank top instead. "And," grumbles Precourt, "they placed the little alligator over the wrong boob."

Alan Halpern, *Philadelphia*'s editor, defends the tits-and-ass covers on the one hand, pointing out that "there are 500 magazines on the newsstand and you have to get people to pick up yours." On the other hand, he expresses concern about always emphazising the sexual angle of a story, agreeing that "there's a danger of distortion. Besides, if you put a girl in a bikini on the cover every month, you end up looking like *Cosmopolitan* and *Playboy*."

Alan Lupo complained about pressure from Lipson to do a "Prostitution in the Suburbs" cover patterned after one that Philadelphia did. "It's probably something that exists everywhere," Lupo says, "and it's worth about six paragraphs in the *Globe*. We successfully resisted that one."

But Halpern defends his "Prostitution in the Suburbs" cover. "It was a whole issue on the suburbs," he says, with stories on crime, the social role of shopping centers and religious revival. Any one of them could have been the cover. Prostitution just seemed to be the one that would attract the most people to the magazine.

"I would like to be an editor of a Sunday supplement," Halpern continues. "When your cover's not up there to sell the thing on the newsstand, you can produce smashing, mood-shot, quality covers — like *New York* Magazine did when it was a supplement to the *Herald Tribune*. *Boston* did a great cover when Nancy Love was there of [Police Commissioner Robert] diGrazia in handcuffs. It didn't sell, because at that time people didn't

Continued on page 18

MAGAZINE
Boston's Super-Chic People:
If Rosemary doesn't have what it takes, who does? Answer inside.

Nick Passmore

"PJ"—and one of his first covers

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Boston

Continued from page 17

know who he was. We live in an imperfect world."

Enter PJ

Into this imperfect world, and into the zany world of *Boston* Magazine, enter Paul ("Call me P.J.") Corkery in April, 1974.

After Lupo had a shouting match with Lipson and quit on the spot, and Nancy Love quit within the next half hour, later telling Lupo that Lipson "has fucked me over too much," Lipson began searching for a new editor. (In the meantime, staffers Gary Griffith and Geoffrey Precourt struggled, with no leadership, to put out the first annual "Best and Worst of Boston" issue. It was a huge seller.) Lipson thought he had found his new editor in *Esquire*'s Lee Eisenberg, but at the last minute *Esquire* entered the bidding and Eisenberg stayed put. Before the dust had settled, Lipson announced suddenly to his staff that he had hired Paul Corkery, the bearded, bright but eccentric, Harvard grad, class of '68, who was editing the *Boston Phoenix* at the time.

The 28-year-old Corkery says he thinks of himself as an unusually young person thrust prematurely into a position of power and responsibility. One suspects, indeed, that Corkery thinks of himself a lot. He consciously imitates great editors of the past, both in his editing philosophy and daily work habits. His particular idols seem to be Harold Ross of *The New Yorker* and Frank Crowninshield of *Vanity Fair*. It is, of course, commendable for an editor to be aware of his profession's history, but some suspect Corkery of overdoing it. One former staffer insists that for a while, Corkery was only returning phone calls between noon and 12:30 and between 4:30 and five p.m. because he had read that some great editor of the past followed such a practice. As a result, of course, he never reached anybody.

The more serious charge, though, is that Corkery won't stand up to Lipson, so intent is he on surviving in a job with an admittedly less-than-secure history, and thus a lot of the chic, sexy stuff that stronger editors had resisted is now showing up more frequently than before. A quick look at recent issues does reveal such *Philadelphia* specials as "15 People We'd Like to See As Mayor," "Shaping Up: 25 Healthie Hubbies Tell How" and even "Recession Chic." One of Corkery's first covers, significantly, was "Boston's Super-Chic People."

Corkery denies any such caving in to the boss. "Lipson hasn't suggested a story to me in six months," he claims. "As the magazine has gotten better — as I think it has — any anxiety that Herb may have had about competence and direction has lessened. I've never found him to be really unreasonable. It seems a question of handling him. Like most men of power, he respects forthrightness. And he has very sharp insights into what works."

Does Corkery agree with Lipson's thesis that what succeeds in one city magazine will automatically succeed in another? He responds with what he calls his "M*A*S*H analogy." It goes like this: "One city is like another in this way. Here's this urban chaos all around us. The fools are in charge. The job is for us to get through it and to have fun — at the expense of the fools, if necessary.

"Of course, the forms of the two cities are very different. This market is much more sophisticated and intelligent than Philadelphia. Certain types of articles — the inflated trend story — don't work here."

The complaints of former staffers and freelancers about Corkery are myriad — ranging from craziness in his daily routine to laziness in his editing chores. "He had two basic strategies," observed one ex-staffer. "Some days he would come to work at one p.m. and yell at those people who were coming back late from lunch. Other days he would come in at eight a.m. to catch those who were coming in at 9:30. He'd come in early just enough to keep everyone paranoid."

"He has a new, pithy short phrase by which he lives every week," says another former staffer. "Currently, it's 'the cosmic tick-tock,' which means the essence of what's going on. He'll say, 'The trouble with this story is it doesn't get down to the cosmic tick-tock.' "

Corkery doesn't deny the common complaints from freelance writers: that he avoids making decisions, leads people on, makes false promises or is slow in paying. He offers, in explanation, his "Penn Station analogy." "They tore down the old Penn Station, put up a new one and kept the trains running at the same time," he says. "That's what I've had to do — and mistakes will happen."

One writer, who has no complaints with Corkery, except to admit that he's "disorganized," is Gerry Nadel, who praises the editor for being supportive. "What he's really good for," Nadel says, "is just sitting down over lunch and blue-skying an idea. He'll really put the flesh on it for you."

A more mundane matter, though somewhat essential, is the actual job of editing copy. And one might, in the past, have asked who was going to do it while Corkery was lunching and blue-skying. Perhaps the best, most thoroughly researched, most hard-hitting story ever to appear in *Boston* was last July's "A Warranty for Murder," by Craig Waters, John Halbrooks and Frank Phillips. It was a powerful and chilling expose concerning corruption and murder surrounding a General Motors dealership in Lowell. This so-called "Motorgate scandal" was pretty much ignored by the usually courageous *Globe*, which was satisfied to print a couple of routine cop stories about it and reprint a *Wall Street Journal* article. *Boston*, thus, deserves credit for delving into the story. But with such a delicate, explosive and potentially libelous piece sitting on his desk on deadline night, should Corkery have

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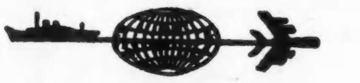

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taken off to the George Frazier memorial dinner at Locke-Ober, without even discussing the story with other staffers or lawyers before it went off to the printers. *Boston* is, indeed, being sued over the article.

This sort of failing may be corrected now that Corkery has put together a new editing team — Michael Sragow, George Gendron and Gwen Kindead — about which Gerry Nadel waxes enthusiastic, adding, "It's just fun to be around that office now. It feels very, very professional." Additionally, the magazine deserves credit, at least, for attempting such investigative pieces as the GM scandal and an earlier one on Rockland Mutual Insurance, the first real examples of digging journalism to appear in *Boston* since Lupo was reporting on corruption in Revere.

Alan Halpern adds that he's impressed with some of the good writers — Dan Wakefield and George V. Higgins, for example — whom Corkery has attracted. By contrast, though, writers out of the Love-Lupo era, such as Gary Griffith and Andy Merton, have been scared off by Corkery's antics. Merton says he's sick of Corkery's indecision and unfulfilled promises. While Nancy Love would work closely with a writer, ending up, Merton says, with a product that pleased both writer and editor, "you give something to Corkery and you don't know what's going to happen to it."

Corkery responds in kind to such barbs from local freelancers, saying he finds Boston writers "sloppy and self-indulgent," and he plans to use more writers from both New York and *New York* in the future. His latest staff addition is Emily Fisher from the "Style" section of the *Washington Post*, who is "coming bubbling with ideas."

Bubbling ideas are nice, but Corkery seems to be flirting with a very real danger of recruiting so many out-of-towners that the magazine will lose the flavor of the city in its writing as well as its covers. It's a danger Corkery recognizes, especially since one of his new recruits, on a venture into Charlestown to view the busing crisis first-hand, walked up to a Boston cop wanting to know where the "Charlestown police" were.

While the ultimate goal or direction of *Boston* Magazine remains unclear — Corkery says this article is either "two months too late or six months too early" — look for possible developments in the near future. When Lipson bought the magazine in October, 1970, he entered into a five-year arrangement with his local investors, at the end of which time either party would have the option of buying out the other. That five years ends next month, and Robert Johnson, the former Lipson assistant, feels that with all the staff changes and the magazine's uneven performance, both editorially and economically, over the years, "the investors would have started asking questions before this." And Jerrold Hickey reports he was approached a year ago by a group inquiring about the magazine's value. He says Lipson had quoted them a sale price of $480,000 — "just what I put into it." "His price is twice what it's worth," Hickey says.

Barring any change of ownership, we're back to the same old question: when will Boston get the *consistently* good magazine so many believe this city deserves. There are, indeed, recent hopeful signs — others, as we have reported, less than hopeful. But there have been hopeful signs before. Like in October, 1970, when Lipson, backed up by *Philadelphia*'s stalwart reputation, burst upon the local scene.

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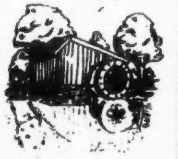

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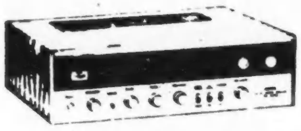

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Busing

Continued from page 10

(Channel 4), the TV ratings leader in town. Mel Bernstein, Channel 7's director of news, was not unaware that the premiere date picked was also the opening day of school in Boston. For the new, longer program, the newsroom had been revamped, the program schedule had been slightly altered and Bernstein had brought in a new anchorman to join Ted O'Brien: Jay Scott from Denver. In a memo to the staff, Bernstein called attention to the placement of sports earlier in the program than on any other channel, which he feels will give the station an edge.

The program is now known as "Newsroom 7" rather than "Boston 7 News." WNAC was also introducing "Newsbreak," a regular feature profiling names in the news. The weather and sports would be done in two separate, non-repetitive segments. Old features, like "Good News," would be continued.

Weeks of preparation went into this day's production. Bernstein was in on Sunday and arrived well before 7 a.m. on Monday. All reporters and crews were to report to work early (6:30 a.m.), go to their respective posts, stay there all day unless told otherwise by the assignment editor, Chuck Gordon, and interview as many people as possible. If an "incident" two blocks away took place, another reporter would be sent. Reporters were to leave their posts *only* if no one else could be found (and only if authorized by Gordon). WNAC assumed that constant watch must be kept on the high schools, Information Center and police headquarters. The WNAC assignment sheet for September 8 showed these crews on the streets:

Marilyn Salenger — South Boston and general
Paul Reece — Charlestown
Jack Kelly — South Boston
Howard Neilson — Information Center
Tanya Kaye — general
Dave Rodman — Police Headquarters
Steve Shepard — Charlestown High
Maurice Lewis — English and Hyde Park
Sharon Nicholls — Roxbury
Garry Armstrong — South Boston

Two general cruiser cars and a "helicopter reporter" were also deployed, according to the sheet.

"Newsroom 7" really is a working newsroom, with wire service machines, television monitors on the wall and maps of Boston's wards all over. Gordon was in continuous communication with each of his reporters. Adding to the traffic were three people from CBS News (WNAC is a CBS affiliate) who were using the facilities. At 8 a.m. the wires and monitors brought word of the first "News Summary" from the Information Center:

> *At 7 a.m. police reported attendance generally good at Boston P.D.*
>
> *Police reported that three as yet unidentified persons were arrested at the Carter Playground in Roxbury. No specific charges available at this time. Group reported forming an auto caravan at Massachusetts and Columbus Avenues in Roxbury at 7:12 a.m.*
>
> *At 7:20 police reported that 40 persons were in transit destined for South Boston.*
>
> *Night police will be relieved of duty at their normal relief time — 8:00 a.m.*

A police band radio was being monitored, as were the television channels of WNAC's opposition, 2, 4 and 5. The Boston morning papers were also carefully read. There were only a handful of people in the newsroom. No one was at the desks. Bernstein, a dapper man, looked somewhat harried. He said, "This is the calm before the storm. . ." At 9:45 a.m. Gordon turned up a monitor giving the first "body count" of the day: enrollments by race for each school.

At 10 a.m. WNAC aired a special school report, with figures on attendance, arrests and "incidents." Before air time, there was a discussion of the graphic or slide to be used with the presentation.

At 10:45 on the police radio, there was a report of 300 people being involved in a disturbance in Charlestown. Cars were overturned.

By now, a pattern was emerging. Film packages for the noon news were coming from the cruise cars. The police radio became a compass by which Gordon made some decisions: an "incident" at McCormick School, Gordon directs a reporter there; a phone call from the field, all quiet in Roxbury.

At 10:50 a report of a heart attack death in the South End; at 11 a police radio reports: "all clear at Perkins School;" at 11:30 the School Department news conference came up on the monitors — and on WNAC's opposition. But Channel 7 decided not to broadcast it — Gordon saying that the station preferred to do its own special "recap" at 11:55 with Howard Neilson.

At 12:15 the police radio reported "incidents" at Charlestown housing projects. Gordon sent over a reporter.

At 12:30 WNAC went on the air with around three minutes spent on each of several high school: South Boston, Charlestown, Roxbury, English and Hyde Park. The overall school coverage added up to 15 minutes, with time out for one commercial. To the outsider, all the busing coverage looked alike: buses pulling into driveways, children getting out, going into school buildings. The coverage of Southie and Charlestown showed some violent scenes. Large groups of students were shown milling around, looking angry. But the scenes were basically quiet and non-violent as the day had so far been. There were scattered arrests and incidents, but the narration emphasized that this year had been much easier than last. School Committee members and police officials seemed happy and said that all was going as expected. They dodged questions about the low attendance, especially of whites at Charlestown High. All were hoping that the decision to let the high schools out first, rather than last, would not produce any more than the scattered incidents of the morning.

1:30 — Someone yelled out a rumor from a phoned-in report: ". . . in Charlestown, a whole line of kids are waiting to throw rocks at the buses. . ." (Like earlier reports about snipers at Charlestown High, the rumor didn't check out.)

2:00 — Gordon called for more equipment to South Boston High. "Activity" was reported at Bunker Hill Community College.

2:30 — The crews and reporters began coming in to edit film, write in-cues, out-cues and narrations. Gordon talked to each one. One reporter told the desk that she'll have film ready Thursday about a new arts program at English High School. Gordon liked the idea, saying it "balances out" the busing news. He added that "the majority of the schools are going well. That should be remembered."

3:00 — By now, most field reporters have returned, and the excitement and noise has grown. Francine Ackbar, assistant assignment editor, said the frantic atmosphere is because of the new studio set. According to the police radio, "high school personnel" were leaving the schools via buses.

The field reporters were greeted like soldiers returning from a war. Most were saying, "It wasn't that bad — A couple of incidents, but not too much." One explained the Charlestown "incident": The crowd was hissing and taunting police who sent in motorcycles. The crowd got angry and some rocks and bottles were thrown, but no one was hurt. "The incident was almost entirely instigated by the police."

Mel Bernstein, the executive producer and others are preparing the lineup for the 6 p.m. news.

3:30 — Reporter Paul Reece, in from Charlestown, said the overall impression was one of quiet. But he expected that "the networks will blow up" the violent aspects of the day without the needed context. Maurice Lewis, in from Hyde Park and English High, said the situations at his posts were calm and "beautiful."

3:45 — More and more, the obvious becomes obvious: the news appears to depend on where the reporters are. According to the crews at the schools, the day went great. According to those in the general areas away from the schools, there was frequent, scattered violence and the day didn't go well.

4:00 — The place was crowded and frantic, just as Bernstein predicted. A very slight man with an earring in one ear has methodically put strips of masking tape in parallel lines one-half inch apart on one of the walls. The Channel 7 newsroom has been made up for its debut. A woman in a white caftan hugged the reporters returning from the field. The police radio quieted down.

4:20 — Paul Reece summed it up: "There was little premeditated, angry violence. The overturning of the car was like what happens at a football game. The kids throwing the rocks and bottles did it because they felt they had to."

Photocopies of the lineup for the news hour showed that the first 20 minutes will be the busing story. There was only one commercial break. The first 30 minutes of the broadcast log looked like this:

1) Headlines open	:20	:20
2) Cart open	:10	:30
3) Chastown Sof/Sil/Cd	3:30	4:00
4) School info live (with Vtr) Cd	2:30	6:30
5) Police Hx live remote/Cd	1:00	7:30
6) Southie Sof/Ct	1:30	9:00
7) Tease	:10	9:10
8) Commercial #1 (Bumper)	1:40	10:50
9) Rover Sil/Sof/Cd	2:30	13:20
10) Roxbury Sof/Ct/Cd	1:30	14:50
11) Hyde Park Sil/Sof/Cd	1:30	16:20
12) Reaction Sof/Live	2:30	18:50
13) Ripley School Sof	2:00	20:50
14) Tease	:10	21:00
15) Commercial #2 (Plunkett Sil)	1:50	22:50
16) Intro & Sports	3:30	26:20
17) Stox/Cd	:20	26:40
18) Tease (Tanya Sil)	:10	26:50
19) Commercial #3	1:20	28:10
20) Intro & Weather	2:40	30:50

There was also an update at 6:35 (40 seconds) and a live remote update at 6:57 (two minutes).

After the day was over, Mel Bernstein thought his news team performed well: "To cover the events, I don't think we set out to be different from other stations. We're just covering the story and keeping an eye out for proper balance. We are covering the story with an eye toward being factual and presenting it with a proper balance. Our job is not to become participants in the event, but to be chroniclers of the event."

As for future school coverage, Bernstein said: "We don't have as many people out in the field at this point, but our approach is still the same. When the kids can go to school peacefully, there will be no need to cover the story."

Clearly, a great deal of work went into the day. The first test of these efforts, at WNAC, at the *Globe* and elsewhere, is the news product delivered that night or the next morning. WNAC was factual and informative. There was a tendency to run with the "best film," such as the scenes of scuffling in Charlestown. But there was also a concern for the general texture of the story — recall the arts feature in the works for later in the week. To some extent, the television cameras were prisoners of the authorities — for example, the rumors and wild chases on the police radio, the rosy statistics of the school department. On most channels the coverage initially reflected a "body count" psychology that went along with the Vietnam-era helicopters.

The newspaper coverage was factual, thorough and "responsible." The *Globe*'s rewriting system, theoretically, opened the door to the imposition of an editorial "policy line" — but no one walked through the door, at least in the first days of school. The *Globe*'s pages reflected the "balance" the editors sought.

Still, there was some troubling behavior by news organizations. The *Globe* in its news column and the *Herald American* in a page-one editorial seemed to be saying that national television should go home and leave the Boston schools coverage in the hands of the local press. The two papers were concerned about the number of reporters present in Boston and the "media hype" in the way the national press circled in on episodes of possible violence. In fact, just about everyone was caught looking the wrong way, for the case could be made that Louisville rather than Boston was this year's significant desegregation story, since city-suburb busing was involved (and there were, incidentally, more opportunities to shoot film of large-scale violence). Yet even this overkill had a good side. The big media people who came to Boston to record violence in the streets stayed on to examine the terrible violence to education being committed each day inside the public schools. There is plenty of "good film" to be shot by camera people, locally and nationally, showing the interior life of a decaying, politics-ridden urban school system. These stories may have less visible drama, but more human tragedy.

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Who Writes Boston's Editorials?

Behind the mask of anonymity, 16 slightly different faces

By Nancy Pomerene

David Krathwohl
Nick Passmore
Nick Passmore

The Globe's Ann Wyman, Ch. 4's Harry Durning and Ch. 5's Phil Balboni

Boston's average editorial writer is an Ivy League-educated white male, 40 years old, with 14 years experience in the business, who lives in the suburbs and is married to half a person. This last observation is not meant to cast aspersions on the character of any of these 16 full-time editorial writers, but simply to say that nine are married and seven are not. What sense does a composite make anyway? Very little, but it's a good way of beginning a story about anonymous people.

And despite the thousands of words that pour forth from this collective body each day, telling viewers, listeners and readers what to think, the authors are as nameless and faceless as the above description. Although each media outlet claims that anyone who wants to be put in touch with the person responsible for a particular editorial will be, the curtain of anonymity still hangs, with all those unsigned newspaper editorials and those TV and radio opinions given by station officials who rarely write the words they speak.

In most cases, however, it is not too difficult to find out who these fonts of wisdom are, and how they develop and produce the positions they take.

*

The largest group of these gray figures can be found at the *Boston Globe*. Their seven editorial writers include Anne C. Wyman (editor-in-charge), Bruce Davidson, Fred Pillsbury, William A. Henry III, John Robinson, Diane White and John Wilpers.

Anne C. Wyman is unmarried and in her early 40s. She is a product of Boston aristocracy (the "C" is for Cabot) who is generally regarded as an unflappable, polite, contained person, with a dry sense of humor. Her staff members say she is fair, considerate and competent. Others at the *Globe* have less charitable descriptions of her — in fact, the term most used is "obnoxious." One *Globe* employee, who has known Ms. Wyman for many years, said her snooty exterior is not her real self, but that she does have "a big throbbing heart" and an attraction to flamboyant and flaky friends. She has little street reporting experience, which her critics are quick to point out, having worked as a feature-oriented suburban reporter and then travel editor for five years, before joining the editorial staff in 1970. When Charles Whipple was made *Globe* ombudsman early this year, Wyman became editor of the editorial page. A Radcliffe

Continued on page 24

Freelancer Nancy Pomerene is a former Globe *correspondent.*

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Writers

Continued from page 22

graduate, Wyman lives in Cambridge.

As does John Robinson, 30, the only black editorial writer among the Boston 16. Robinson, whose father is the chief public information officer for the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, grew up in Natick and graduated from UMass at Amherst, where he was a popular student leader. Robinson is also unmarried and is described as a convivial, articulate man who had four years reporting experience at the *Globe* as a general assignment and then financial reporter before joining the editorial staff last November. He writes chiefly on civil rights, including women's and workers' issues.

Diane White, in addition to writing a *Globe* column, does most of "the lighter stuff" on the editorial pages. She has been at the *Globe* for six years, before that at *Newsday* on Long Island. After writing for the *Globe* "Living" pages for several years, she covered the Edelin trial this summer and was then moved to editorials. (Insiders say it is not necessarily a promotion to be moved there, and some writers have been shifted to editorials because they haven't been performing well as reporters; others get reassigned as an award for good work. Ms. White is considered one of the latter.) A 30ish divorcee, who was born and raised in Boston and still lives in the city, Ms. White is a Simmons College graduate. She has a lively sense of humor and an insightful mind, as evidenced in her columns.

Fred Pillsbury, 52, writes mainly on city politics. He was a City Hall reporter at the *Globe* before joining editorials two years ago, and prior to that, was an editorial writer at the old *Herald Traveler*. Pillsbury, a Harvard graduate, lives with his wife and three children in Milton and spends a lot of time sailing.

Bruce Davidson, 44, another Harvard man, lives in Belmont with his family and writes chiefly on economic issues. He was the economic editor at the *Globe* for several years and has been writing editorials there longer than any other staff member. William A. Henry III and John Wilpers are the two newest additions to the staff. Henry, a 1971 Yale graduate, came to the *Globe* that fall and worked as a State House reporter until a few months ago. Wilpers, a contemporary of Henry's, came to the *Globe* editorial staff a few weeks ago from western Massachusetts, where he still lives. He is currently on a trial basis in the department.

While the *Globe* editorial staff changes often — and wants to, lest the members become entombed in the ivory tower — the *Herald* staff is more fixed — and happy to stay there. Ken Thompson, with 10 years experience writing editorials for other papers, has been doing it for the *Herald* since 1969, and John Brooks, a *Record American* employee for ages, started writing editorials at the *Herald* when those papers merged in 1972. Thompson, 40, a Harvard graduate and tennis buff, lives in Reading with his wife and four children and writes mostly on state and local issues. Brooks, a 60ish bachelor with a background in law, lives in an antique house he cherishes in Wilmington, is active in that town's politics and writes on national issues.

Both are considered politically in tune with the *Herald* management's conservative philosophy, and, say *Herald* reporters, Thompson is the better writer, but Brooks is a perfectionist who toils long and hard at his typewriter.

The *Christian Science Monitor*, though a national paper with a circulation over 20 million, is Boston-based, and devotes a daily section to New England news. The paper has three editorial writers.

Charlotte Saikowski, editor-in-chief, has been with the *Monitor* since 1962. Now in her 50s, she has won a slew of journalism awards for her coverage of Russia and Japan. A diplomatic correspondent before her June 1974 appointment to her present post, Ms. Saikowski, a Wellesley resident, is single, likes music and skiing and has a poster on her office wall showing a smiling Henry Kissinger beneath the words "I am Henry — Fly Me to Damascus." It's signed, "To Charlotte, who never lost her head — Henry Kissinger."

Roderick Nordell, also about 50, plays squash and the drums, lives in Cambridge with his wife and children and, during his 25-year career with the *Monitor*, has been book editor and arts editor. Brad Knickerbocker, the newest *Monitor* editorialist, is a generation younger than his two colleagues, went to Hobart College, was a Navy pilot, is married and has an excellent reputation among Boston journalists who knew him as a New England reporter for the *Monitor*.

In the broadcast field, Harry Durning is the dean of editorial writers. A grandfather in his 50s, Durning holds an MA in public administration from Harvard and has been editorial director at WBZ (Channel 4) for 15 years. He comes across as an intelligent, committed man, who thoroughly researches his subjects and then follows through with personal involvement in the editorial causes he supports. Durning, who lives in Sudbury, was once a police reporter in North Adams and, more recently, was one of the original organizers of the Boston Citizens Housing and Planning Association, the first chairman of the Massachusetts Public Welfare Council and now legislative chairman of the state's Council for Public Justice.

Channel 4 executives encourage each other — and Durning — to become activists in causes the station editorializes about. "The news staff couldn't do this and remain objective," says Durning, "but we're entirely separate from the news department and feel we should be on the inside of things to know what's really going on. Our attitude is that you can't be half-pregnant — you either support a position on the air — and off — or you keep your mouth shut." (In all cases, print and broadcast, the editorial departments are distinct and autonomous from the newsroom staff, and reporters are generally discouraged from personal involvement in any issues they report on.)

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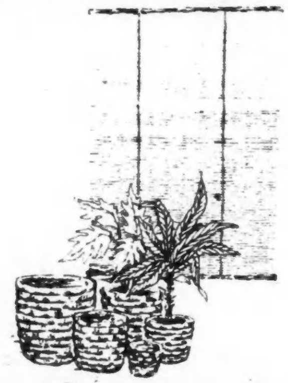

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November 2 **NORA EPHRON**
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1976
April 4 David K. Niles Memorial Meeting
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April 11 **AYN RAND**
Topic To Be Announced

April 18 **BRUNO BETTLEHEIM**
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April 25 George W. Coleman Memorial Meeting
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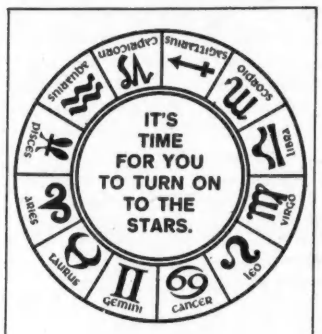

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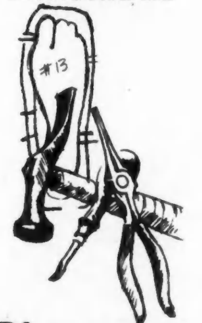

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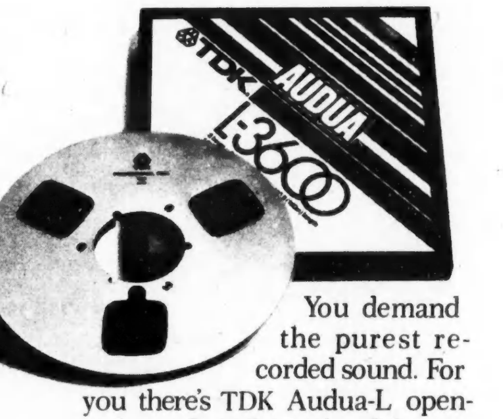

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Writers

Continued from page 24

The Channel 4 policy of encouraging activism is not shared to any great degree by the other editorial departments in town. Philip S. Balboni, editorial director of WCVB (Channel 5), says he would feel "compromised" writing an editorial on something he was personally involved in and prefers to see the station management do the public flag waving, with himself in the background. Balboni, 31, is on the board of the National Broadcast Editorial Association and editor of the group's newsletter. He is a Norwood native who now lives with his wife and daughter in Newtonville. He graduated from Boston College and then went to Columbia on a Ford Foundation journalism fellowship, was a reporter for the Richmond (Va.) *Times-Dispatch* at the same time when the *Herald*'s Ken Thompson was there, and worked for UPI in Boston prior to joining the station as editorial director three years ago. In his spare time, which he says is rare, Balboni reads books like Jerzy Kosinski's *Cockpit* and Philip Agee's book on the CIA and "all the magazines you might expect: *Harper's*, *The New Republic*, *The Atlantic*, and others like that." In his office hangs a bumpersticker, "Who killed JFK?" Balboni says he's sure it wasn't just Oswald, and it's an area of interest that grabs him.

Pamela Bush, 29, editorial director of WNAC, was vacationing in Europe when this article was being researched. But William Hahn, Channel 7's vice-president for community relations, provided some of the basic information on Ms. Bush, and people who knew her from her previous job as director of public affairs and press secretary for the state Welfare Department, provided more. Ms. Bush, recently married, has a master's degree in sociology from Boston University, and a bachelor's in liberal arts and journalism from Syracuse University. A Cambridge resident until she and her husband purchased a home in Harvard, Ms. Bush is described as "a very natural person — perceptive, introspective, energetic and persistent." One friend said Ms. Bush "looks at things very directly without too much intellectual baggage or bias and comes up with ideas that are fresh and creative, if not overwhelmingly sophisticated."

William Hahn said the station is particularly proud of a Pam Bush "quickie" idea that turned into a series of pre-Christmas editorials about alcoholism and won her a National Safety Council award. Said Hahn, "The topic was one you might expect at that time of year, but the editorials were presented so compellingly that no one could ignore them."

At newsradio station WEEI, Deanna Harris has been responsible for researching and writing editorials for the past two-and-a-half years. Before that, she was a publicity assistant at the station and before that, a public relations consultant in Florida who worked on Gov. Reuben Askew's campaign. She was also a McGovern delegate to the 1972 Democratic convention in Miami. Ms. Harris is 34, single and one of the two voices heard on the air reading WEEI's editorials (the other is station manager Eugene Lothery). She is the first woman on the editorial board of the station, which she says is a happy outgrowth of the station's management change within the past year.

Policies and Predicaments

All the broadcast media have editorial boards of station executives who develop editorial policy, while the print media have a more flexible operation, with the prime responsibility for coming up with something suitably expressing the corporate image left to the writers, with irregular input from management.

Within these operations, there are differences ranging from Channel 4's policy that editorials must be unanimously approved by the board to the *Globe*'s policy which officially leaves things up to Anne Wyman and her staff. At WEEI the editorial board often gets out in the street to see what people are saying before doing an editorial, while at the newspapers, that kind of street contact is extremely rare.

Balboni and Ken Thompson at the *Herald* say they have written editorials they don't personally agree with; the *Globe* writers and WBZ's Harry Durning say that never happens to them, and the *Monitor* staff tries to please everybody, but most importantly, the church officials.

According to Wyman, *Globe* publisher Davis Taylor *never* (her emphasis) sits in on mid-morning editorial conferences, while Thompson says *Herald* publisher Robert C. Bergenheim often does. But top editors at both papers do have a definite say in the final product. Said the *Globe*'s John Robinson, "Their process is to sit around and shoot the shit, leading to a consensus, which is not too hard for a group of fairly liberal people who share a great body of ideas in common on broad issues." Wyman assigns topics and approves the pieces, with the more controversial editorials always scrutinized by *Globe* editor Tom Winship.

The *Herald* writers confer regularly with the reporters, a situation which differs from the *Globe* process which doesn't consult reporters before editorials appear on topics they have been covering. This particularly irritated many reporters at the *Globe* who have been covering desegregation. In the words of one street reporter, "We'd be out there taking all the crap and 'maggot *Globe*' bullshit and finally get the people to believe we really cared about presenting the anti-busing side, when Anne Wyman would come out with one of her lofty editorials and our credibility would be shot. The man in the street doesn't differentiate between news stories and editorials, and so it looks to them like the reporters are lying. It would definitely help if the editorial writers listened more to us and really talked about both sides of the issue."

In the case of the recent Boston preliminary election endorsements, some of the *Globe* City Hall reporters who were not asked for their opinion were surprised — and angered. Said Curtis Wilkie, who has been writing on the Mayor's race, "I was annoyed — not because I wasn't consulted, but because I wasn't told beforehand that the endorsements were coming out." But City Hall bureau chief Robert Jordan said he is often con-

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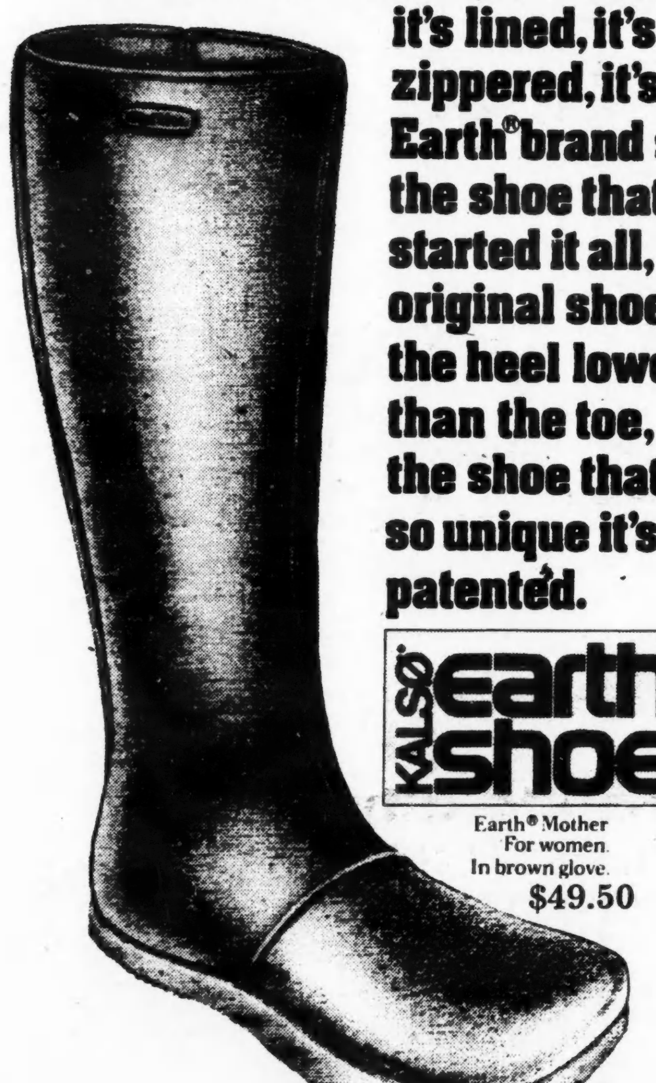

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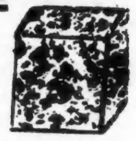

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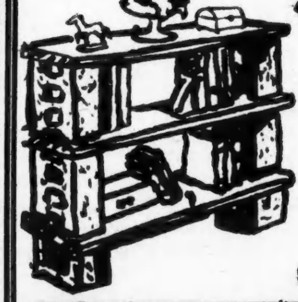

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sulted prior to publication of an editorial on city politics and did confer, at length, with the editorial department before the latest endorsements.

The *Herald* did not endorse any candidates before the preliminaries last week but may, according to Ken Thompson, make selections before the November election. He added that any such endorsements would certainly be prefaced by talks with the political reporters, education specialists covering the School Committee and various editors. The *Herald* also prints editorials from the Hearst wire service in New York. Said one employee who works with the editorial department: "About a dozen of these pieces come in every week, and nearly all of them get into the paper some way or another." The wire editorials, usually on national or international issues, are not "dictated for use" by *Herald* management, but since they come accompanied by a "please use as soon as possible" memo from William Randolph Hearst, Jr., they aren't ignored.

The TV editorials are conceived and produced differently from the newspaper pieces. Channel 4, for example, believes it is better to talk about fewer topics more often, and has run a series of 40 or 50 pieces on one topic over the course of a year to get a point across. One such case was the station's 1971 campaign to reform state drug abuse laws, which, said Durning, had a substantial impact on the ultimate passage of such a bill.

Channel 5's format is about the same as WBZ's: five topics a week, aired four times a day. Rebuttals are included among those pieces, accounting for about 40 percent of Channel 5's time slots and one-third of Channel 4's. Channel 7 does both series campaigns and one-shot pieces, and its emphasis is to make the editorials "the liveliest on the air." WNAC generally runs three different pieces a day, all week, and each editorial runs about a week.

"As a general rule, most viewers don't like editorials," says William Hahn, "so we try to provide the most provocative topics, presented in the most effective way to catch their interest. I don't believe it's the quantity as much as the quality of the editorials that matters, and I certainly think we're getting better all the time in that area."

Channel 7's "Save Our City" campaign of last September is still being talked about. That series showed pictures of local politicians and civic leaders and asked the question "What have you done for Boston today?" Right now, Channel 5's series on abuses within the state Department of Youth Services is getting a lot of attention. During our interview with Phil Balboni, he received four calls, offering kudos, complaints and additional information on the editorials. That series was Balboni's own idea, unlike the station's campaign for gun control, which he didn't personally agree with.

None of the television stations will be endorsing political candidates and, according to Balboni, the real reason is that since the stations are regulated by the FCC, a couple of politicians who did not like a station's choices "could really make a lot of trouble in Washington when it came time for license renewal. It's too risky to jeopardize a license worth a couple of million dollars for a one-shot endorsement."

But excluding the area of political endorsements, broadcast editorials are expanding the number and nature of their topics — and often get greater public attention than the print editorials. And because of the government's "fairness doctrine," TV and radio must encourage opponents to come forth. At Channel 4 Harry Durning says they used to ask for "responsible spokesmen" to speak their minds, but on the advice of lawyers, they now ask for anyone who wants to voice their opposition. "And we wind up getting a much better response," says station vice-president Tommy Thompson, "because we find the lady from Dorchester is often more articulate and more in tune with the real opposition point of view than some politician or well-known character."

Channel 7 has a new gimmick — a "crawling" sentence against a silent screen asking for rebuttals — which, William Hahn points out, has been tremendously effective in getting replies.

Although some point to a trend to hire or pick syndicated columnists for newspapers, the print editorial is not an endangered species, say all the persons who make their living writing them. Why? Because the columns are still only one person's view, the editorialists maintain, and may take extreme positions, while the editorial must be "a more balanced and sensible product."

Says the *Globe*'s Diane White, who pens both columns and editorials: "A column gives our own feelings and can be as outrageous as we like. The editorial is the voice of the newspaper as a civic and corporate entity. The newspaper is less responsible for what appears in a column, while the editorials reflect the ideas of a group of people and are weighed much more carefully."

Both the print and broadcast editorial writers feel strongly about the impact of their work, but the TV writers claim they are much less predictable, and therefore more credible. "I defy anyone to put us in a bag of liberal or conservative," says 4's Harry Durning. "We've been in support of the fuel adjustment clause, against using billions of dollars for some environmental projects, for legalized gambling and desegregation, drug reform laws — and right now, for the investigation and use of solar energy."

Phil Balboni says Channel 5 is especially proud of being "the only major medium" in town to criticize the court's Phase Two desegregation plan. He said the *Globe*, in particular, "was myopic" on that issue, not taking into account the neighborhood people's sentiments. He pointed out that 5 has also called the proposed Dickey-Lincoln Dam "a disaster, when the *Globe* went for it hook, line and sinker," and has gone on the record against legalization of gambling and for prison reform and a revamping of the state criminal justice procedures.

But does it all matter? The broadcasters agree people would turn the page on a lot of their editorials, if they could, and the newspaper writers know that most readers do just that. But all say the "powers that be" give great credence to the editorial stands, and, through that impact, the words do make a substantial difference to John Q. Public.

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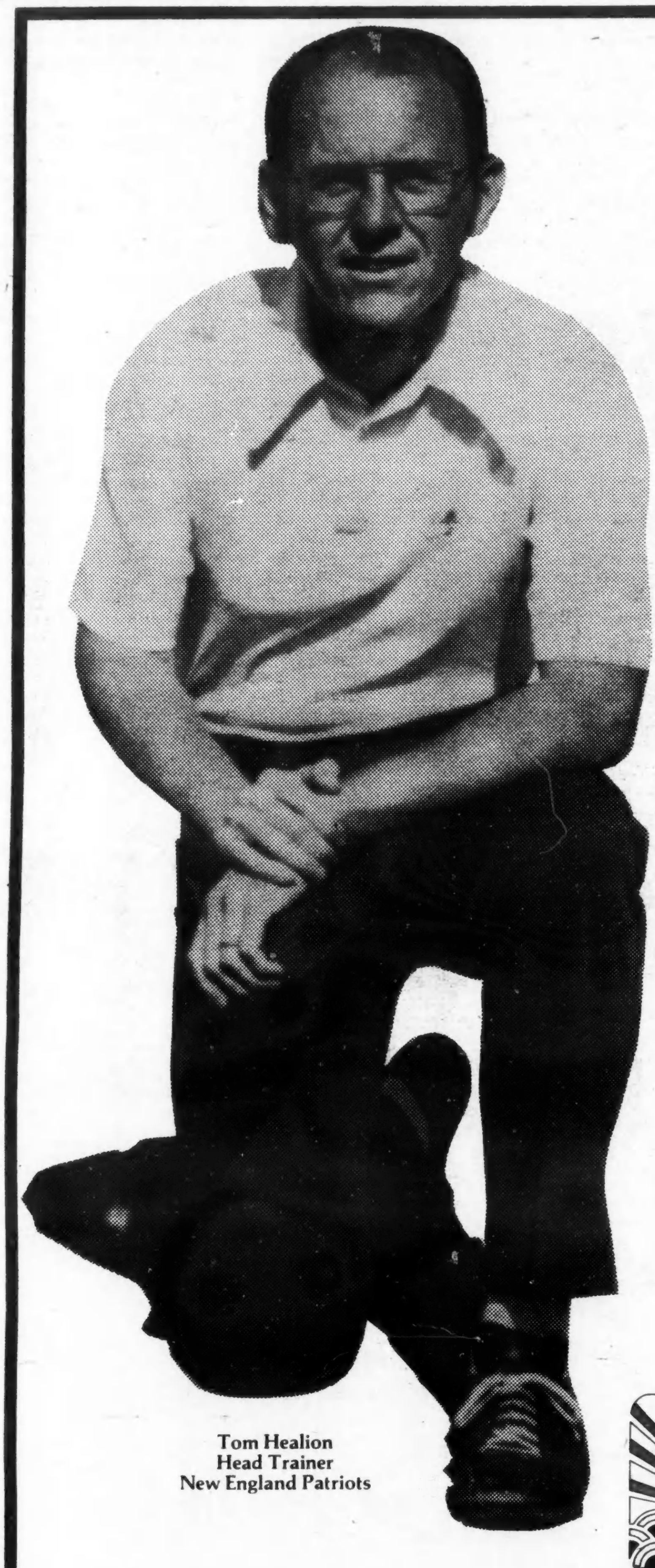

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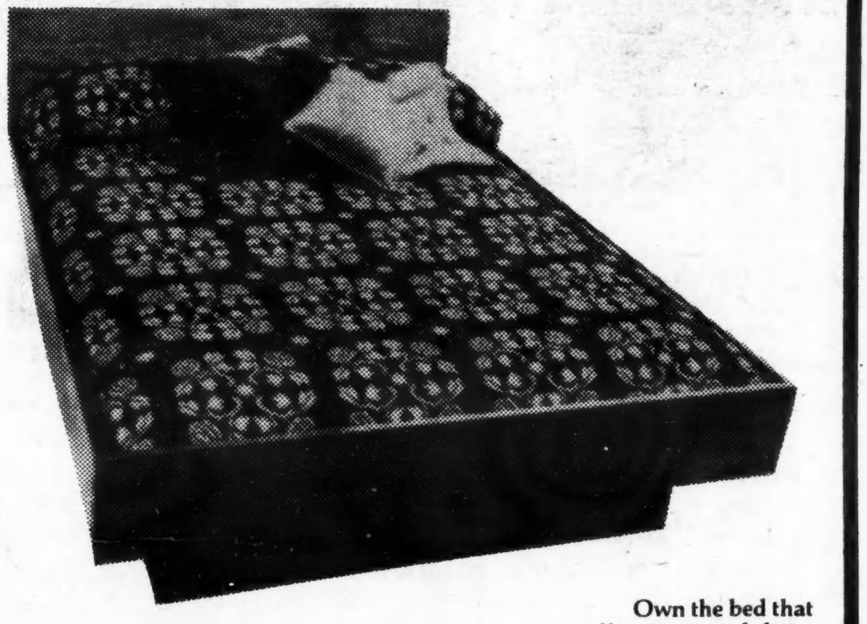

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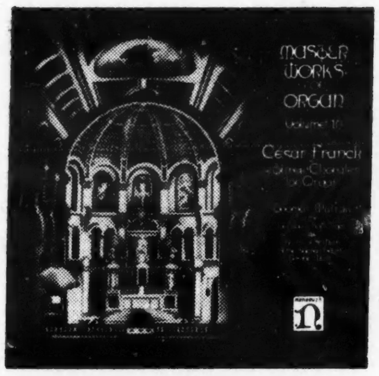

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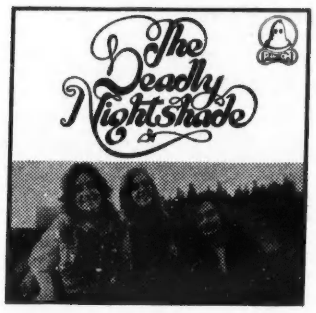
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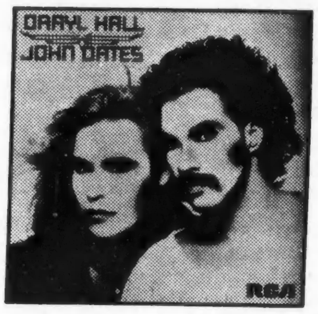
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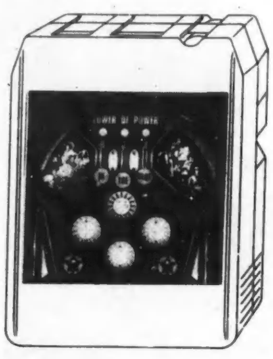

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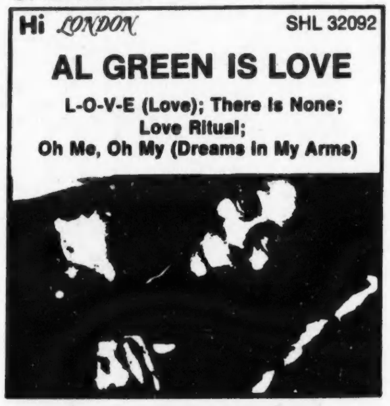
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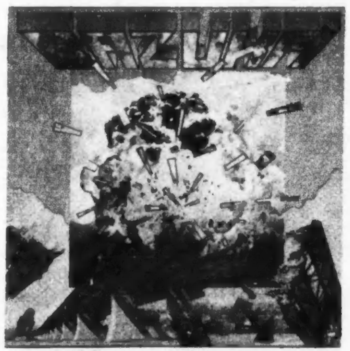

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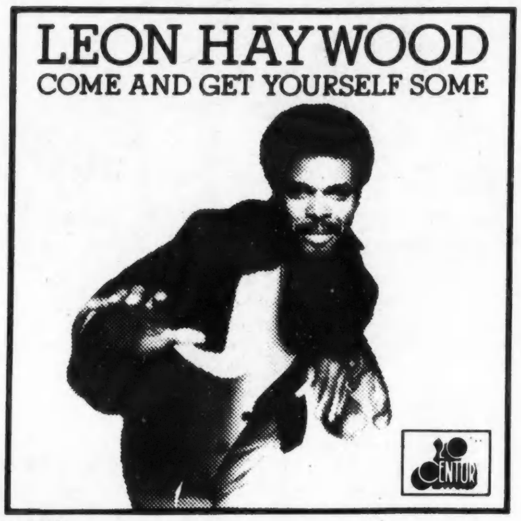
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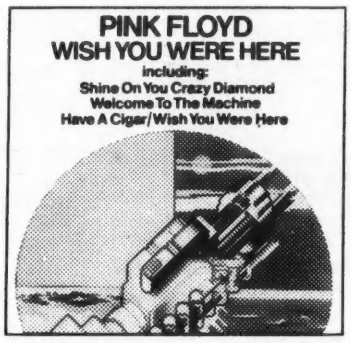
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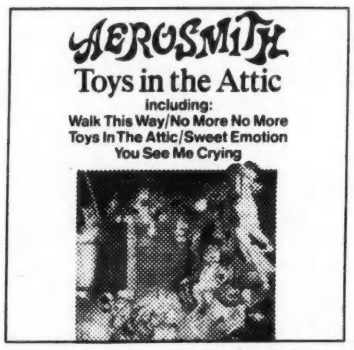
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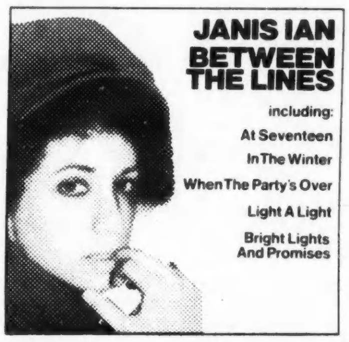
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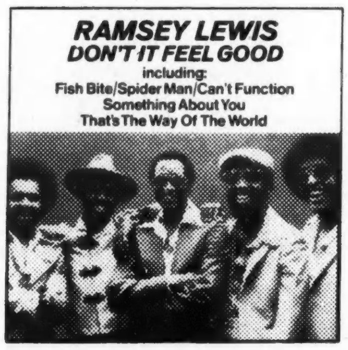
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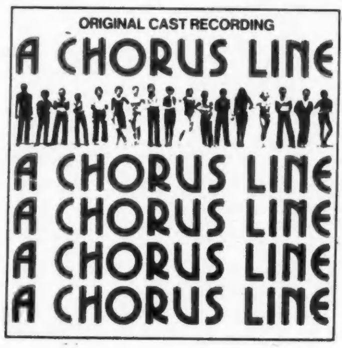
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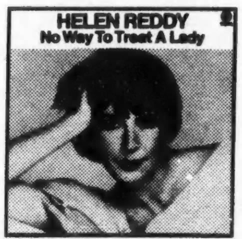
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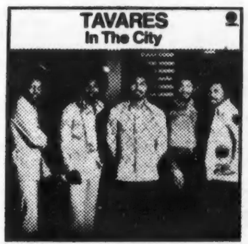
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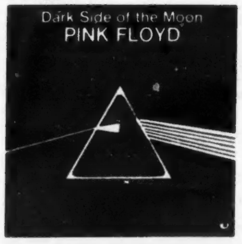
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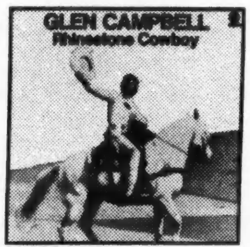
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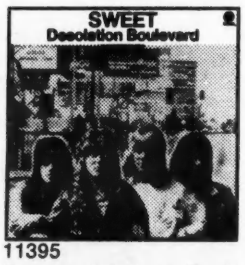
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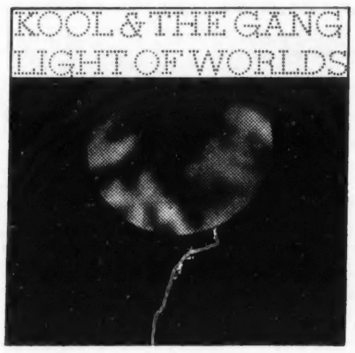
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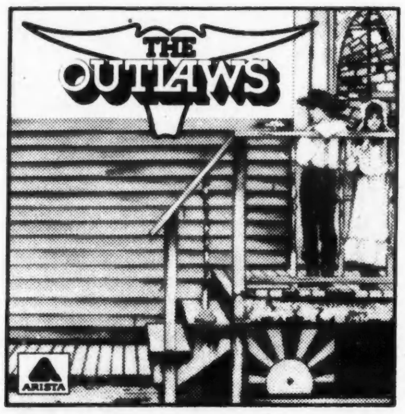
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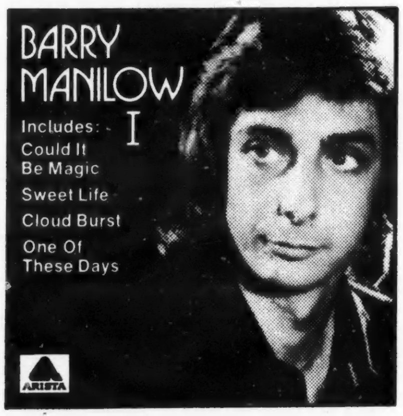
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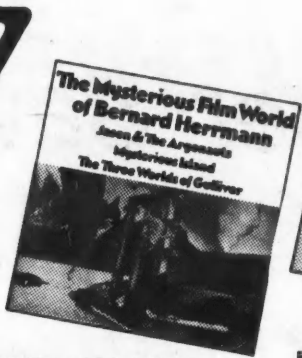
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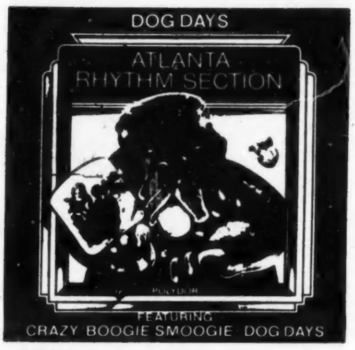
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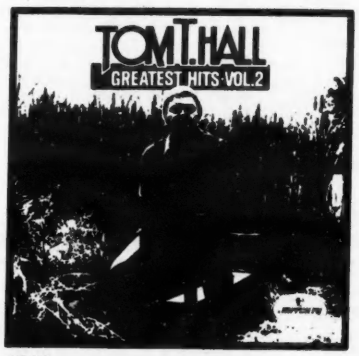
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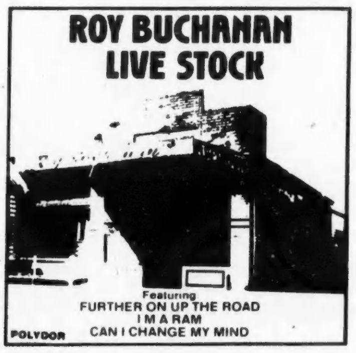
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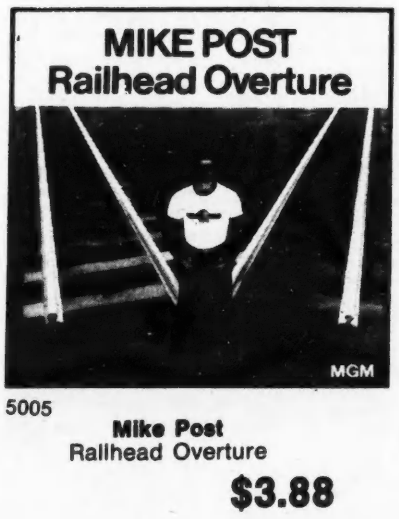
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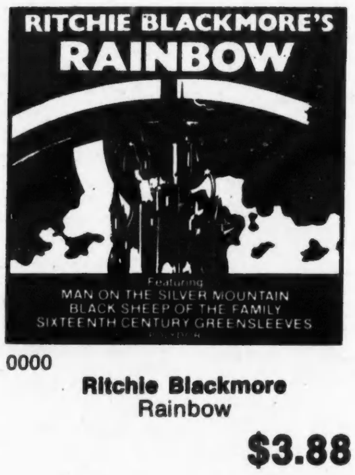
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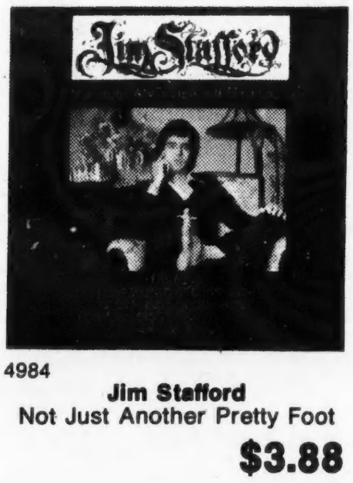
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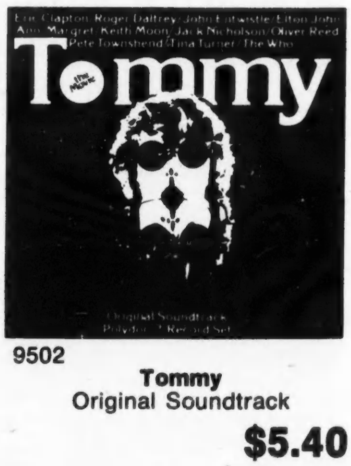
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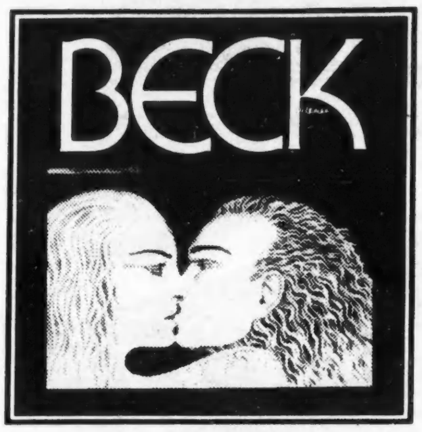

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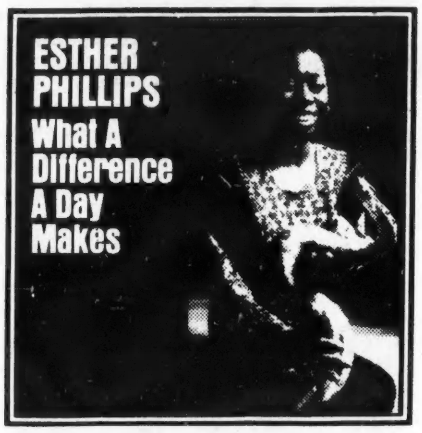
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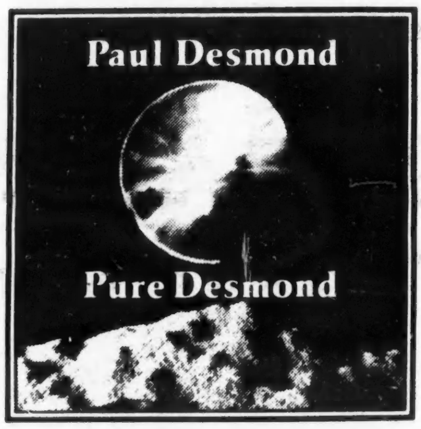
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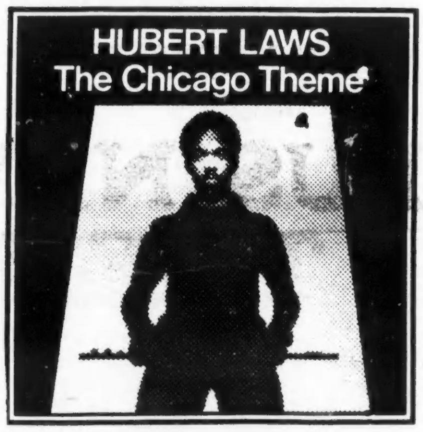
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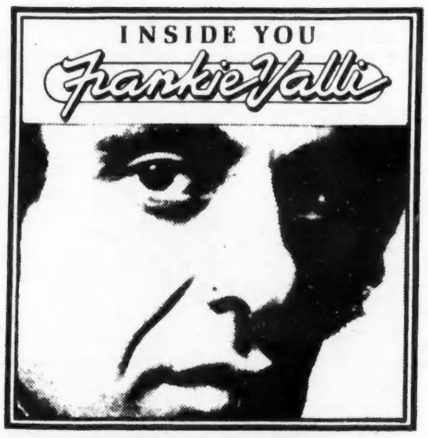
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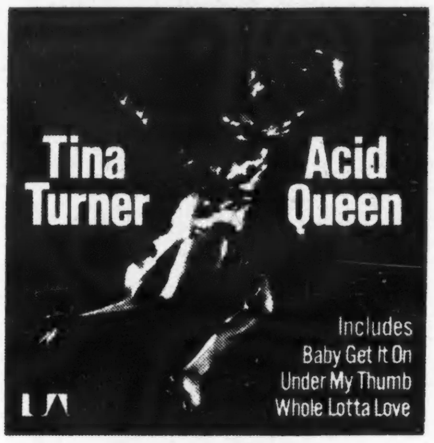
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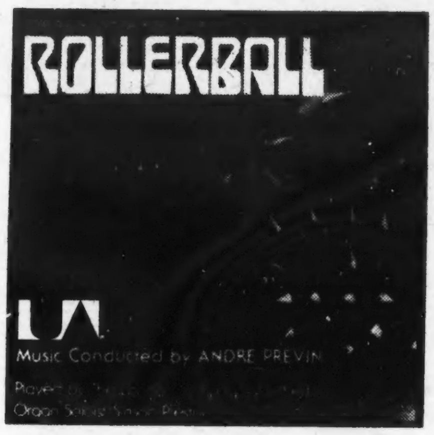
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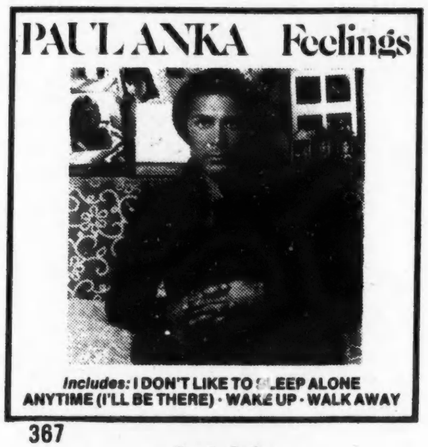
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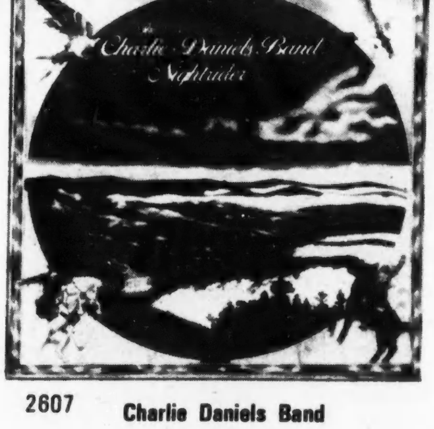
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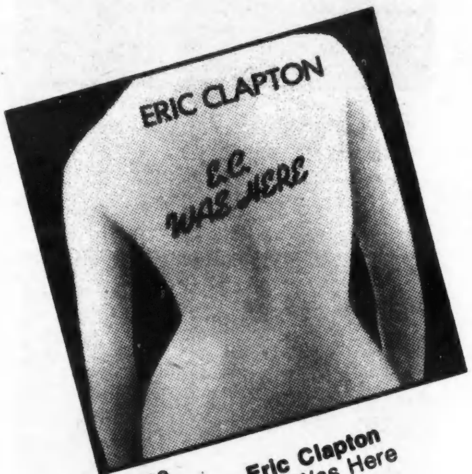
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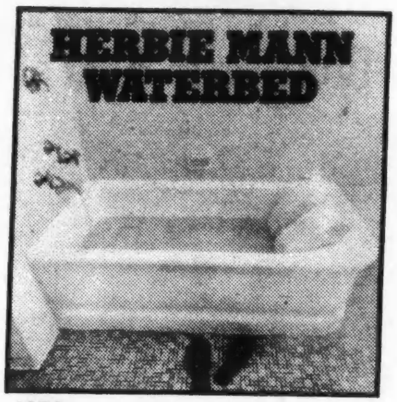
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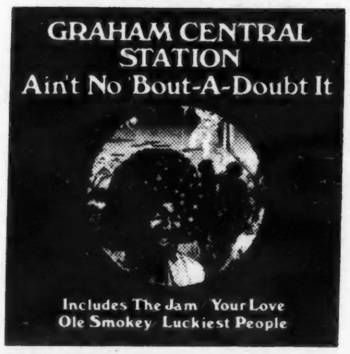
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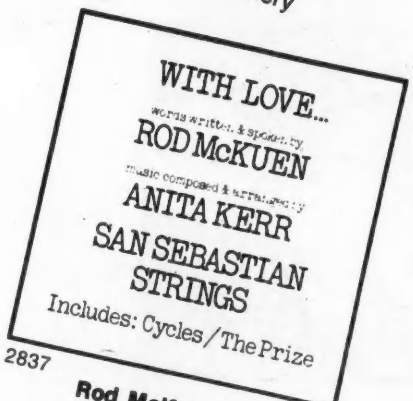
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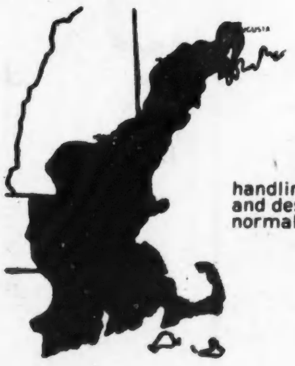

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